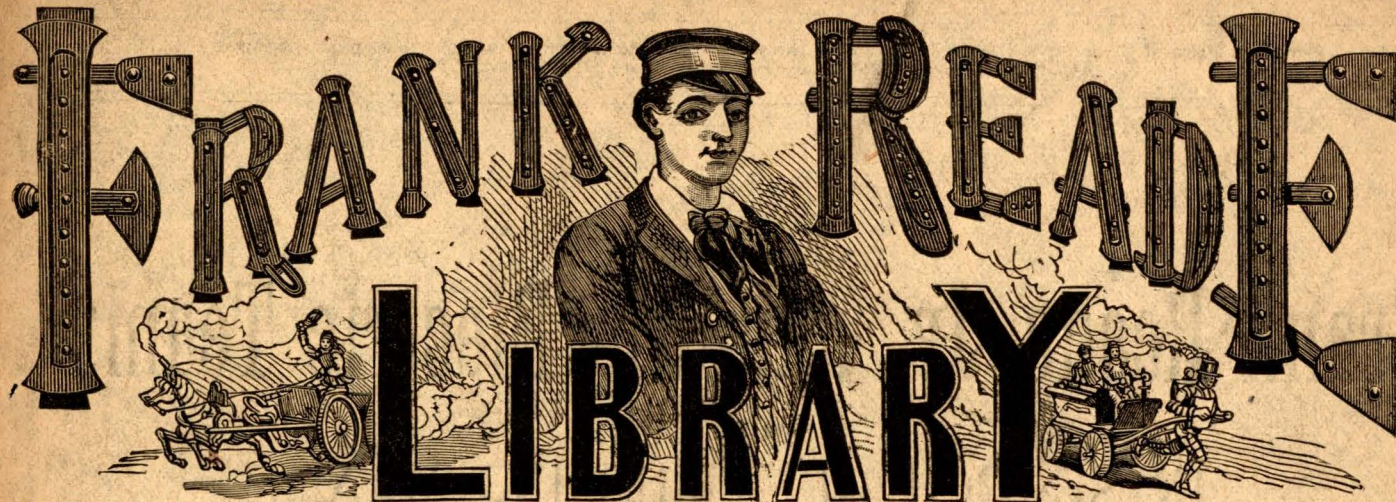


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# Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Team: OR, IN SEARCH OF A MISSING MAN. By "NONAME."



The coach was run out into the road, and in a few moments Moreland and the beautiful dancing girl sprang out of the cover hand in hand and rushed toward the coach, while close in pursuit came a score of the jungle-men.

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# Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Team;

## OR, IN SEARCH OF A MISSING MAN.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Across the Continent on Wings; or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Greatest Flight," "Frank Reade, Jr.'s 'Sea Serpent,' or, The Search for Sunken Gold," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I.

#### FRANK READE, JR.'S, LAST INVENTION.

"WELL, doctor, it is agreed, then, that we go to Central America," said Frank Reade, Jr., one day some four months subsequently to the safe return of himself and his comrades from their adventurous journey through South America.

The celebrated young American inventor, and his old friend, Dr. Vaneyke, the scientist and explorer, were seated on the veranda at Frank Jr.'s residence in Readestown.

"Yes," replied the doctor, "I will accompany you on your new expedition, for I have always had a great desire to explore certain portions of Central America, which are as yet little known to the civilized world."

"Well, it will take me about four weeks to complete my last, and I think in many respects, most remarkable invention."

"Ah, so you are confident that it will prove a success?"

"Yes, there is no doubt of that. My Electric Team will be the grandest triumph of my life, doctor."

"You are a remarkable genius, Frank, and you are never satisfied with your achievements. I've no doubt that within a few years you will invent something else that will then be the greatest of all your wonderful productions."

"Well, perhaps you are right, doctor. The fact is, I am never content to be idle. It is a pleasure for me to work out novel and wonderful mechanical ideas, and I suppose I shall keep at it as long as I live."

"Yes, I don't doubt that in the least. Frank is a chip of the old block all over, and at his age I felt just as he does. But I resolved when we returned from South America that I would never venture to make another such a journey, and now I want to persuade Frank to remain quietly at home for a few years. You see, doctor, I've a good deal of important business to look after, and I really need Frank's assistance," said Mr. Reade, Sr., coming out of the house in time to hear the last remark made by Frank, Jr.

The old gentleman was accompanied by Frank, Jr.'s, beautiful wife. Mrs. Frank Reade, Jr., fully shared her father-in-law's opinion that Frank should remain at home for awhile. In fact, the lady was heartily weary of her beloved husband's long absences.

Never while Frank was away was she entirely at ease, anxiety and solicitude for her husband's safety in the midst of the perils which he was sure to encounter during his travels, constantly troubled the fond wife.

She had been trying to make Frank, Jr., promise that he would not undertake another journey for five years, and she had not as yet abandoned the hope of keeping him at home for that period of time, at least.

Mrs. Reade, Jr., now hastened to support the opinion of the old gentleman, saying:

"Father is right, Frank. Your duty is clear. Your father and your wife certainly have the most earnest desire and need for your presence at home. Doctor, will you not take our side, and advise Frank to abandon his proposed trip to Central America and remain at home?"

Mrs. Reade crossed to Frank's side and placed her hand upon his shoulder, while she bestowed a delightful smile upon the good doctor, who was ever the pink of gallantry.

Now, Dr. Vaneyke honestly thought Frank, Jr., ought to remain at home for a time, and now find himself appealed to by the beautiful lady, despite the fact that he was anxious to explore Central America, the doctor voiced his honest opinion, saying:

"Certainly, the lady is right. Let's put off our journey for the present. Ties of kindred and home are sacred, you know, Frank."

"Well, well, I did not think that you could be so easily won over by the enemy," said Frank, laughing. "But since I am outnumbered and deserted by my support, I suppose I may as well surrender," he added.

"And that means you will stay at home," cried Mrs. Reade, Jr., in delight.

"Yes, that is to say for five years, unless you change your mind and bid me go, dear."

"I shall never do that," replied the wife, earnestly.

She little thought then that the time was soon coming when she would take back her words under strange and thrilling circumstances, and yet such was to be the fact.

Frank, Jr., had yielded gracefully at last, because his heart told him it was his duty, and he was not selfish enough to put his personal wishes before the happiness of those he loved.

Indeed Frank was glad to remain at home with his devoted wife, and it was only the prompting of ambition and his insatiable love of adventure that impelled him to set out on a new expedition.

"Well, well," Frank, Jr., said presently, "I shall at least go on with my latest invention, and I promise you, doctor, that if you will call at my workhouse just four weeks from to-day at sharp noon, you shall see the great 'Electric Team' you have heard me say so much about. You know I do not like to exhibit my inventions until they are all complete and in good working order."

"Yes, and, therefore, none save your self and the machinist you have employed to assist you know anything about the wonderful Electric Team," replied Dr. Vaneyke.

"You must except Pomp and Barney. Those two faithful fellows have worked with me—doing some of the rough part of my task—and they are quite as enthusiastic about it as I am," said Frank.

"By the way, where is Pomp? I was just going to ask you to allow him to carry a letter over to the post-office for me. I have writtten the English Resident of Cabul, Afghanistan, asking him for further particulars regarding the untimely death of my friend and cousin, Richard Carlyle, the celebrated geographer and traveler," said the doctor.

"Pomp is down at the work-shop; but he is at your service, and I will call him," replied Frank, Jr.

"Thank you," said the doctor, and as Frank, Jr., pulled a bell-wire which communicated with the bell in the work-shop he continued:

"I have spoken to you about my Cousin Richard before, Frank."

"Yes, you told me that you had received authen-

tic information that your cousin and his party had all been massacred by a band of Afghan robbers in Central Asia," answered Frank.

"Indeed, I was not aware that Richard Carlyle, whose works of travel are among the most entertaining and reliable volumes in my library, was a relative of yours, doctor," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes; as I have said, he is my cousin. True, however, he is only my third cousin, but we have been friends from boyhood, and we are brother members of 'The International Geographical and Historical Association.' Poor Richard, he was cut down in the prime of life, and just when he had fallen heir to a magnificent fortune. You must know that by the death of an uncle recently, Richard Carlyle fell heir to a splendid inheritance. By the terms of the will, in the event of Richard's death, the fortune comes to me," said Dr. Vaneyke.

"Ah, then you are a man of wealth, doctor?" said Frank, Jr.

"Yes, thanks to my uncle's will. But the thought that fortune comes to me by the death of Richard deprives me of all the pleasure I might otherwise experience in the possession of the gold. Richard and I loved each other with a sincere brotherly affection, and I could not experience more sorrow than I have known since the news of his demise reached me."

"And you are positive that the report of Richard Carlyle's death is reliable?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes. Quite so, as I have said. The information was received by the English Resident of Cabul, Afghanistan, and he sent the news to Calcutta via the 'East Indian Telegraph Company's' line. Thence the news reached England by the regular mail steamer, and a telegram from the London branch of 'the International Geographical and Historical Association,' by the Atlantic cable, finally conveyed the message that had traveled all the way from Asia to me."

"I am interested in the fate of Richard Carlyle almost as much as though he had been a friend. Indeed, I feel as if I knew the man, through his books. But what was he doing in Asia at the time of his death?" said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"In company with two European companions, one of whom, Tom Moreland, the brilliant young artist and journalist of New York, Richard Carlyle was making a journey through Asia in order to gather the necessary facts and dates for his proposed geographical and historical work," replied the doctor.

"And Tom Moreland perished, too!" exclaimed Frank, Jr.

"Yes, poor fellow."

"Poor fellow, indeed, I knew Tom Moreland. He was a college chum of mine, and one of the most brilliant men I met at Yale," said Frank, Jr., with feeling.

"And who was the other European in company with Carlyle and Moreland at the time of the massacre?" asked Mr. Reade, Jr.

"Captain Jack Conway the veteran wild animal hunter and traveler. He went to Asia as an agent for Barnum, hoping to secure strange animals and curiosities in the unknown regions of Asia which no European has ever penetrated," said the doctor.

"A trio of brave and learned men," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes, Captain Jack Conway has been all over the world, and he has hunted wild animals in every land," assented the doctor.

"Here comes Pomp," said Frank, Jr.

As the young inventor spoke, the jolly, reckless, black marksman, came around the corner of the house.

Pomp looked as fat and happy as ever.

His open countenance, covered by a broad grin, which disclosed a double row of ivories, from ear to ear, was as comical in its expression as when we first knew him.

He pulled off his hat and said:

"Heah I is, boss."

"All right, Pomp; the doctor wishes you to run over to the post-office for him," said Frank, Jr.

"Yes, here is a letter I would like you to post."

The doctor placed the letter in Pomp's hand as he spoke, and the good-natured dorky hastened away with it.

The conversation between the friends was then resumed, and the doctor went on to say:

"The last message our association received from Carlyle was dated from a camp in Turkestan. This message came by caravan to India."

"And since nothing has been heard from the explorer himself since then I fear that it will be difficult to locate the scene of his death or secure his remains for Christian burial," added the doctor, after a pause.

"True; and it will also be as difficult—one may say impossible—to punish the murderous Afghans."

"Yes, I've no hope of that."

Frank, Jr.'s, eyes suddenly dilated, brightened, and he started up. But his wife drew him down to his chair, and said quickly, drowning a remark which Frank, Jr., commenced to utter:

"Now you are getting excited, Frank."

In a whisper she added:

"Now, do not forget your promise, Frank."

This little by-play was not lost on the good doctor, though he seemed not to observe it.

Just then the sounds of band music in the town was heard.

"What does that music mean, I wonder?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Oh, there's a circus in town. The band we hear belongs to the show. They are making a parade," replied Frank, Jr.

"Yes. And that reminds me that all the servants indoors have asked leave to attend the circus to-day," said Mrs. Reade.

"And Pomp and Barney have also determined to go. Indeed, I think there is some sort of a wager between them about the show, though I do not know just what it is," Frank, Jr., remarked.

"Well, suppose we make a party and all go!" suggested Mrs. Reade, Jr.

"An excellent idea. Anything for a change. Readestown is a pleasant place, but I confess it's becoming rather monotonous to me," said Dr. Vaneyke.

"Yes, I agree. We'll all go to the show," assented Frank, Jr.

"And if Barney and Pomp have some wager about it you may be sure there'll be some fun not down on the bills, I think," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Judging from what I know of Pomp and Barney I would stake a good sum that you are right, Mr. Reade," said the doctor.

As he spoke Barney came up the walk from the work-shop.

The belligerent, good-natured, fun-loving Irishman had not changed a bit since we saw him last. He was the same funny old Barney O'Shea all over.

Barney had a short pipe in his mouth, and he was puffing away in evident enjoyment of the weed.

But, removing the pipe from his lips as he came in sight of the company assembled on the veranda, Barney said:

"Bedad, it's not runnin' a side show I am. Bad luck to me eyes, but I'll be after raisin' a bit av a ruction with the bla'guards, so I will."

"What's up now?" asked Frank, Jr., smiling.

"Faith af' thim cirkis fellers was up."

"Where?"

"Til the shop."

"Ah, is that so?" cried Frank, Jr., jumping up, in excitement, as he thought the safety of the Electric Team might be endangered.

"Yis, begorra! But I sint thim away, an' if they come forinst the shop a-lookin' and peerin', be the harp av Tara I'll get down me sprig av a shillalah an' have a bit av a shindy wid 'em."

"No need of that, Barney. I think you are spoiling for a fight. No doubt the show people heard the village gossips tell about my new invention, and they were naturally curious to see it. They went away peaceably when you told them the Electric Team could not be seen, yet, I presume?" said Frank, Jr.

"Oh, yis, sir, they wint away. But, begorra, I heard one big bla'guard say he'd be after havin' a glimpse av the Electric Team yet before the show left town."

"A mere idle boast, Barney."

"I don't know about that, begob. Sure, an' thim circus fellers could make a fortune wid an Electric Tame loike yours in their show."

"Well, lock up the shop carefully when you are through work for the day."

"Yis, sir. An' bedad, it's at noon we'll knock off for the day, if yez plaze, Master Frank."

"Oh, you want to go to the show?"

"Pomp an' the other workmin do. But, bedad, it's mesel' as is only goin' on account av me wager wid the nagur, bad luck to his eyes."

"Tut, tut, I hope you and Pomp haven't been quarrelling again."

"Well, I niver knock under to a nagur, Master Frank. Of'm an Irishman, long life to me, an' begorra, I kin bate any nagur at his own game. An' fot did the black villain stale me flask for, I dunno?"

"See here, Barney, you know I have forbidden your quarrelling with Pomp a hundred times. Don't let me hear of any trouble between you now. You understand?"

"Yis, sir. But be the tail of Biddy Dolan's goat that rached unto ould Ireland an' rang St. Patrick's bell, O'll not stand an' have the nagur call me a loiar!"

"I shall reprimand Pomp if he has done anything of the kind. You may tell the mechanics that I am willing they should stop work for the day at noon."

"Long life till yez, Masther Frank, an' if yez will give me lave to bate the nagur jist once faith, an' yez'll make me a happy lad the day."

"Go along with you, you foolish fellow. You know well enough if Pomp ever butts you with that cannon-ball head of his it's all day with you."

"But not all night, be dad," muttered Barney, as he turned back to the work-shop.

A few moments later Pomp returned. The dorky seemed somewhat excited.

"What's the matter?" asked Frank, observing this, as Pomp began to stutter a trifle in the attempt to say something hurriedly.

"Dar am two wild men after de doctor!" said Pomp.

"What do you mean?" demanded Frank.

"Jiss what I say, sah. Dar am two wild men after de doctor. I s'pees dat da am 'scaped from de cirkis show, sah."

"You ridiculous fellow. How in the world have you reached the conclusion that the wild creatures are after the doctor, as you express it?" asked Frank.

"I heard 'em say so, sah."

"What did you hear them say?"

"I done heard 'em ax where Dr. Vaneyke lived, an' dat da wanted to found him."

"Are you sure of what you say, Pomp?"

"Dead sure, sah."

"Well, this is very singular," said Dr. Vaneyke.

"Dar come de wild men, now," cried Pomp, at that instant.

## CHAPTER II.

### A PROMISE RECALLED.

ALL present glanced in the direction indicated by Pomp.

They saw two strange-looking men approaching from the village. Indeed it seemed that, as Pomp said, they must have escaped from the show, so singular and wild was their appearance.

One of the men was somewhat taller than his comrade, and he was bearded to the eyes, while his hair hung upon his shoulders. A red handkerchief was knotted about his brow in the form of a turban. A pair of wide yellow pantaloons, a strange-looking jacket of flannel, and a pair of sandals completed his attire.

The other one of the two strange men was smaller than his comrade in every way, and his costume was much the same.

"Ah, the smaller man is an East Indian, evidently a Hindoo!" said the doctor, coolly, as the two strangers approached near enough for him to see their faces quite plainly.

"Yes," assented Frank, Jr. "But his companion is surely a European."

"Yes," replied the doctor.

"Golly! Dem fellers nebbber seed a barber I s'pees! Hole on dar! Hole on!" cried Pomp.

He uttered the last command as the two strange men paused at the gate, and seemed about to enter.

"Leave me to deal with them, Pomp," said Frank, Jr., going forward to the gate.

Pausing there he addressed the strangers, who had also halted at Pomp's command, kindly saying:

"What do you wish, my friends?"

"For God's sake tell me is not that man Dr. Vaneyke?" cried the stranger, who looked like a European.

As he spoke he pointed at the doctor.

At the sound of his voice Frank started as though he had received a sudden shock.

His eyes dilated as they became fixed upon the other's face.

"Thank Heaven! You are Frank Reade!" cried the stranger, as he now looked at Frank, Jr., intently.

"And you are Tom Moreland!" exclaimed Frank, Jr.

Dr. Vaneyke leaped from his seat and bounded to the gate as he heard Frank, Jr., pronounce the name of one of his cousins, Richard Carlyle's comrade who was supposed to have perished in Asia.

The good old doctor trembled from head to foot.

For once he was surprised out of his habitual equanimity, and he said:

"Can it be, sir, that you are Tom Moreland, the artist, who accompanied Richard Carlyle on his ill-fated journey to Asia?"

Meanwhile Frank, Jr., and Tom Moreland were wringing each other's hands in a grip of true friendship.

"Yes, I was Richard Carlyle's comrade in Asia," replied Moreland.

"And your companion?"

"He is called 'Mohammed the Faithful.' He is an East Indian and my servant."

"And, and, I scarcely dare ask the question, what of Richard Carlyle? You must know that intelligence, in which I placed the most complete confidence, informed me that my cousin Richard and all his companions were massacred by the Afghans? Tell me that Richard lives?"

"Richard Carlyle was living when I left Asia."

"Thank God!"

The old man dashed tears of joy from his eyes as he heard the glad tidings, and uttered his heartfelt exclamation of gratitude.

"Come into the house, you and your servant, Tom, and partake of refreshments, and then you shall tell your story, and explain how you came here in your wild costume," said Frank, linking his arm in that of his old college friend.

"All right, Frank; I do feel a trifle 'rocky,' as we used to say at Yale after a 'night off,'" replied Moreland, cheerfully.

Mohammed, the East Indian, did not utter a word.

But he followed his master as Frank led him to the house.

The returned wanderer, who was in very deed like one returned from the grave, was presented to Mrs. Frank, Jr., and the young inventor's father.

Then the party went into the house, and refreshments were placed before Moreland and the East Indian.

When they had satisfied their hunger, Frank, Jr., said:

"Now for your narrative, Tom."

"You shall have it, and it will not take me long to tell it in a condensed way. My presence proves that the report of the massacre of all of Richard Carlyle's party was incorrect."

"The fact is, the report must have originated in this way. Our party was attacked by robbers in the mountains of Hindoo-Coosh, in Afghanistan."

"We had a desperate fight, and Captain Jack Conway was wounded by an Afghan spear-thrust, and Richard Carlyle and Conway were made prisoners."

"Mohammed and I escaped in the darkness and fled southward. We were fortunate enough to fall in with a caravan of merchants bound for Persia."

"We traveled with the caravan to Bushire, on the Persian Gulf, and there took passage for Muscat, the nearest port whence we could communicate with the English Consul at Cubul."

"The Persian vessel upon which we took passage was wrecked in the Arabian Sea, and Mohammed and I floated for seven days in an open boat."

"Finally, however, a sail hove in sight, and we were picked up, more dead than alive, by an American vessel bound homeward to New York, from Calcutta."

"We reached New York, and pressed on here immediately, not even waiting to don a civilized garb or make ourselves more presentable, for I had the doctor's address, and I could find no one at hand to identify me. In fact, more than one person made me feel that I was taken for an impostor. You know, Frank, I have been absent in London for twelve years, and it's not much wonder no one in New York knew me in this rig."

"When we were attacked by the Afghan robbers we mutually promised each other that the one fortunate enough to escape, if indeed we did not all perish, would devote every energy and

means at his command to bring about the rescue of the others.

"I knew that you, Dr. Vaneyke, was devoted to Richard Carlyle, and that you were a Fellow of the International Geographical and Historical Association, of which Carlyle is a leading member.

"I said to myself, Dr. Vaneyke is the man to appeal to. He will render me assistance and help me to find the missing explorer. I say explorer, using the singular number, because I believe that Captain Jack Conway died from the effects of his wound before I escaped.

"He had fallen, and was silent for some time before I found a chance to elude the foe, who had hemmed in Carlyle as he became separated from me. I spoke to Conway, and felt his heart beat. He did not answer, and I could not feel his heart beat, so I concluded that one of the bravest spirits I had ever known had taken its final flight."

Tom Moreland paused. His strong, clear, manly voice broke a trifle, and his friends saw that he was deeply moved. Mohammed did not utter a sound, but his great black eyes were fixed upon the face of his master with a look that was eloquent of sympathy and love.

As Moreland concluded Dr. Vaneyke involuntarily arose from his chair. His intelligent, intellectual face was illuminated. The light of a noble and heroic resolve flashed in his eyes, as the reflection of a grand, true character.

"Mr. Moreland," said the doctor, in a tone of intense emotion and earnestness. "You did right in coming to me first; I will undertake to find my missing cousin, Richard Carlyle. No means or expense shall be spared, and I will personally head the great, and it may be long and perilous search, through Asia."

"And I will go with you!" said Tom Moreland positively.

Mohammed still remained speechless, but he quietly changed his position, and placed himself at his master's side. It was evident that wherever Moreland went, there the faithful Hindoo would go also.

"Now let us discuss our great project, and consider how we can best carry it into execution. You must know that the greatest dangers and obstacles are in the way of him who seeks to explore the almost unknown regions of Asia," said Moreland further.

"Yes, I grant you that. There are perils from savage men and wild beasts at every step. Yet we must overcome them," replied the doctor.

"It will be necessary to organize a strong caravan, and the news of its movements will be known by the natives ahead of us fifty miles. So they will have plenty of time to assemble and give us battle or get Carlyle out of the way. No, no, I was too hasty. A caravan will not do," said Moreland.

"Then what do you advise?" asked Dr. Vaneyke.

"A small party. We must proceed secretly. But no disguise can long conceal the identity of a European from the wild men of the Caucasus. No, that will not do. A small party would be massacred. Indeed, doctor, I am at my wit's end. If we only had the means of proceeding swiftly in Asia, and at the same time the ability to repel an attack, we might succeed. But I am unable to think at this time, of any expedient that seems feasible," replied Moreland.

Frank Reade, Jr., had listened to all this with feelings of intense excitement, which he found it difficult to express. His wife read his thoughts from the expression of his countenance, and she knew that he was thinking of his wonderful Electric Team, and that with his last surprising invention, he could journey anywhere through Asia, and bid defiance to all the savage tribes and ferocious beasts.

Mrs. Reade's heart beat fast. She knew that a noble wish was in her husband's heart. She was moved herself in sympathy for the missing explorer, whose fate was an unsolved mystery.

And now Dr. Vaneyke turned his fine old face upon Frank, Jr. His very soul was in his eyes. The glances of the two friends met. They understood each other's thoughts, and the doctor exclaimed:

"The Electric Team, Frank!"

"Yes. The Electric Team could take you through Asia in spite of all the dangers and obstacles in the way," assented Frank.

"Will you—will you go?"

In the intense mental excitement of the moment the good doctor almost shouted the thrilling question.

He realized that the fate of the missing man hung upon the decision of the young inventor.

Frank wished to assent. Every prompting of his chivalrous nature appealed to him to do so. He felt that he could in the name of humanity scarcely refuse. And yet he could not forget that he was bound by a promise—that he had passed his word but an hour ago that he would remain at home for five years.

For a moment Frank hesitated, and then he said:

"You forget my promise, doctor. But I am sure my wife does not. It would be the greatest pleasure of my life to rush to the rescue of Richard Carlyle with my new electric conveyance, but you know I never break my word."

Dr. Vaneyke uttered a deep groan.

Tom Moreland and Mohammed, not clearly understanding, evinced by their expression some surprise.

The doctor turned to Mrs. Reade, but she did not wait for him to speak.

Before the doctor could utter a single word the good lady was on her feet. Her beautiful face was pale, but resolute, and her lovely eyes were glowing.

"Dr. Vaneyke, you heard my husband's promise to remain at home for five years, and you cannot have forgotten that there was a *saving clause* in that promise," said Mrs. Reade, Jr.

"Yes, yes; Frank said he would remain at home for five years, unless you bade him go."

"Right, doctor. And now it shall never be said that Frank Reade's wife stood between him and his duty—that she retarded him when he would accomplish a work of noble heroism. No, no, Frank, you are released from your promise. I give you up for the time freely. Go—go! Save the noble life that is in deadly peril far away in Asia, and may the good God grant you success and bring you safely home again."

Frank, Jr., sprang up and embraced the noble woman as she spoke, and then turning to the doctor, whose face was radiant, though a glistening tear or two of deepest joy traced his cheeks, said:

"My wife has answered for me. I am at your service, doctor. The Electric Team shall go to Asia, and I will devote myself to the task of searching for the missing man heart and soul."

"Bravely spoken, Frank. By Jupiter! I'm almost tempted to recall my own decision about staying at home in future and volunteer to go with you," said Mr. Reade, Sr., heartily.

"No volunteers accepted," said Frank, Jr., lightly, and then he proceeded to explain something about his latest invention. When he had concluded Moreland expressed himself as convinced that with the Electric Team they could safely make a journey through Asia, though he affirmed:

"I foresee, however, that we shall have some desperate fights and some thrilling adventures."

As Moreland spoke, Mohammed silently bowed before Frank, Jr., until his forehead touched the floor. It was an oriental salaam expressive of his profound admiration.

"Is your servant speechless?" asked Frank, Jr., smiling.

"Oh, no. But he is a singular character. When he speaks he always has something of great importance to say. Mohammed has been a great Asiatic traveler, and he speaks many of the languages of the different races in Asia. He will accompany us, and he will be of great service as an interpreter, while his knowledge of the country will be of exceeding value," replied Moreland.

Just at that moment a shout was heard from the direction of the workshop, and Barney was heard to yell:

"Whoop! Bad luck til the nagur! Oi'll have his blood. It's massacrein' me, the dirty blackguard is ather tryin' to do!"

Frank ran out of the house, saying:

"Barney and Pomp are at it again, sure!"

The doctor followed Frank, Jr. Coming to the shop they saw Pomp standing in the door, while Barney was dancing about before him in his shirt-sleeves and brandishing his shillalah threateningly, while he shook his left hand as if it pained him.

"Come on, ye nagur! Come on an' see an Irish gentleman bate the map av Ireland in black an' blue on yez yug mug tu the tune of St. Patrick's day in the mornin'! Bedad, I had a foin wee drop of the ould stuff in a flask in me coat, which I left hangin' in the shop. The nagur stole it, an' called me a loiar whin I told him av it. Oi'm a peaceful long-sufferin' mon, bedad, an' I let that pass, out av respect til yer orders, Masther Frank. But just now, be me soul, the nagur is ather addin' insult til injury. Faith, an' he brought the sledge down on me hand whin I wuz houldin' the chisel for him. Bedad, it's to murder me he's ather tryin', and so I ax yez to let me give him *wan*. Jist *wan* good Donnybrook soaker."

Barney made the exclamation as he saw Frank, Jr., and the doctor coming.

"Dat Irishman done told a lie, sah. I doan know nuffin' bout his whisky," said Pomp.

Just then Mrs. Barney O'Shea came around the corner of the shop with a whisky flask in her hand.

"It's mesel' as took the flask out av yer pocket, an' not the nagur, Mr. O'Shea. Sure, an' is that the ways yez are ather kapin' yer promise to drink no more? Faith, an' whin I get yez home, Mr. O'Shea, I'll comb yer hair fer yez so I will, wid the broom stick!"

"Arrah, listen til the jewel! Sure, an' it's herself as has the nate an' plasin' way wid her av' jokin' d'ye moind," said Barney, looking very sheepish.

"Now den, you Irishwoman, you done see what a fool dat husband av yours am. He done 'sult Pompus right yar. When he say he stole de bottle, you was de thief, Mrs. Barney Irisher," said Mrs. Pomp, who had been washing at the Reade residence that day, and now came running from the kitchen.

"The nagur calls an Irish lady a thief! Hould me bonnet, Barney. It's Worth's latest—from the ash-barrel—an' see me paralyze the African wench," shouted Mrs. Barney, and she made a rush at Pomp's wife.

At the same moment Pomp ducked his head and made a butt at Barney. The ducky struck Barney in the pit of the stomach, and he turned a back somersault, and knocked over Mrs. O'Shea and the brunette as he fell. The three were decidedly mixed for a moment, and Frank and the doctor fairly roared with laughter.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ELECTRIC TEAM COMPLETED—IN INDIA.

FRANK saw there would be a general free fight between the two couples unless he interfered, and so he did so. Seizing Barney by the collar he placed him on his feet, and then he ordered Mrs. Pomp to the kitchen, and directed Pomp to go to the garden to pick some fruit.

Then having admonished both parties that the next time they had a row he would make it a more serious matter for them, Frank returned to the house accompanied by the doctor.

"It's odd how Pomp and Barney are always fighting between themselves, and yet how devoted they are to each other at heart. Why, either one would fight like a tiger against an outside party in the other's behalf, and have they not each saved the other's life more than once?" said the doctor.

"Certainly. But it's all Barney's fault. He can't rest easy any length of time without a fight or a 'bit av a ruction,' as he says, and so if there is no one else handy he is sure to pick a quarrel with Pomp," replied Frank, Jr.

On rejoining Moreland and the others in the house Dr. Vaneyke said:

"How long did you say it would take you to complete the Electric Team, Frank?"

"I have calculated that it will be finished in just four weeks from to-day noon," replied Frank.

"Oh, yes. And so we shall have to wait that length of time before we can start for Asia."

"Yes."

"Well, we must wait as patiently as possible, since in the Electric Team reposes all our hopes of success," said Moreland.

"That is quite true," assented the doctor.

"Who will compose our party?" asked Frank, Jr., and he turned to the doctor as he spoke.

"How many persons will your electric conveyance carry?" asked the doctor.

"A dozen persons, if necessary."

"In addition to the supplies which we shall have to take along?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, I should say our party would consist of yourself, Mr. Moreland, Mohammed, Barney, Pomp and I."

"Six all told?"

"Yes. So we shall have room for six more if at any time we should increase our force."

"Yes. But I do not anticipate that it will be necessary to add to our number."

"Probably not. But it's best to be on the safe side. By the way, Frank, are you sure Barney and Pomp will go?"

"Oh, yes, I had told them of my proposed trip to Central America, and they were both anxious to accompany me. They have become so inured to a life of travel and thrilling adventure, that I really think they are quite unhappy if they are obliged to remain at home long in peace and quietude. Though Mrs. Barney makes it rather lively for Barney at times."

"Well, the brave fellows will be of the utmost value as members of our searching party."

"Certainly. We have tried their courage and devotion in almost every land, and never found them wanting."

"Indeed no. Two more reliable men could not be found."

"Now, Mr. Moreland," said the doctor, turning to the returned Asiatic traveler, "will you not give us some idea of the best route to take to Asia. Where shall we land?"

"Yes, and in what direction shall we first explore the country. Asia embraces such a vast territory, I am a trifle interested to know where we shall be likely to venture," said Frank, Jr.

"I think we should proceed by steamer from New York to Calcutta, India. There we should land, and then proceed in a north-easterly direc-

tion across Hindostan to the Afghan state. As the last we know of Richard Carlyle, he was in the neighborhood of the Afghan mountain range, called the "Hindoo-Coosh," we should direct our first explorations naturally enough to where he was left by me. There at least we may be fortunate enough to obtain some clue which will serve to guide us aright. The savage band by whom Richard Carlyle was taken a prisoner is of nomadic habits. They are wanderers, and we may be obliged to follow them a great distance. Our friend, moreover, may have been sold into slavery by his captors."

Thus replied Moreland.

"Ah, then we shall have a chance to explore the wonders of India," said Frank.

"Yes, and as Hindostan is a country full of wonderful revelations for a European, the journey will no doubt be an interesting one, and not without danger," said the doctor.

Then ensued a further conversation relative to the supplies needed for the expedition, and the friends conversed for a long time. Finally, after noon-day luncheon had been served, Moreland, who had consented to remain at Frank Reade, Jr.'s, home as a guest until they started for Asia, said that he was so worn out and fatigued with long travel that he would like to sleep away the afternoon.

Accordingly he was shown to an apartment, and Mohammed accompanied him.

"The East Indian makes me think of a faithful watch-dog. He scarcely ever leaves his master," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"True. He is as devoted to Moreland as Corrajo, the gauchó, is to Dr. Vansyke. By the way, doctor, why not take Corrajo to Asia with us," said Frank, Jr.

"I would like to do so. But only last week he went back to South America. He told me he should return in about two months and bring a bride with him," answered the doctor.

"I believe we decided to attend the circus this afternoon," remarked Mrs. Frank Reade, Jr., presently. "Of course, I don't care to go on my own account. It's only to please you aged children," she added, smiling.

"All right. It's time we were moving," assented Frank, Jr., and half an hour later our friends found themselves in the circus tent.

At the door Frank, Jr., met Pomp, who volunteered to say:

"I've hean for to won seben dollars off frum dat Irish, sah."

"How is that?" asked Frank.

"Why, you see the cirks folks hab offered a reward ob ten dollars to any one dat kin ride de trick mule around de ring, and dat Irishman done bet me dat he could ride de mule roun' de ring and I couldn't. So we is boff a gwine for to hab a try at mistah mule, sah."

"Ha! ha! ha! There is fun in the air now," laughed Frank, Jr., and he was right. The circus performance went off smoothly until the trick mule was brought into the ring. He was a small, vicious looking animal, and kept kicking and bucking in a way that informed the spectators what one who tried to ride him might expect.

"I am authorized by the management to state, ladies and gentlemen, that he will give ten dollars in gold to any person who will ride our celebrated trick mule around the ring. Now, who'll be the first to have a try for the tennor," said the clown.

No sooner had he spoken the last words than Barney shied his hat into the ring, and followed over the ropes with a whoop.

"Sure 'an it's an Irish lad kin ride the baste! Many's the wan I've drove til a jauntin' ear in the ould sod. Barney O'Shea is the boy to claim that ten spot!" cried Barney, and he leaped upon the mule which at once started on a gallop only to suddenly halt, depress his head, and send Barney head first into the sawdust, while the audience roared.

But Barney was pure grit, and he tried it again and again, but it was no use. The mule would buck, bite, lay down, and roll over, and do every trick known to throw his rider, and finally he chased Barney out of the ring kicking and biting.

"Be dad I don't want tin dollars bad enough to ride the baste. Faith, it's the devil he is in a mule skin!" cried Barney, as he ingloriously fled from the ring.

Frank and his friends, as well as the rest of the audience, had laughed until their sides ached already, but there was more fun ahead. Scarcely had Barney got out of the ring when Pomp entered it.

"Here I is, sah. I'se agwine to ride dat mule, sah," said Pomp, quietly, and he was permitted to mount. But Pomp had once worked for a horse-breaker down south, and he knew what he was about. He locked his legs around the mule's neck and threw his arms around his belly, while he lay flat on his back. Then there was another cir-

cus, in more senses than one, but Pomp had the trick mule foul, and after making plenty of fun for the audience, he succeeded in riding him safely around the ring.

Then Pomp went for Barney, and demanded the wager he had won. But Barney refused to pay it.

"Sure, an' look at the impudence av the nagur! Do yez think it's green Oi am? Faith, an' yez didn't roide loike a Christian. It's no money av mine yez will get," said Barney.

The next minute Pomp grabbed him, and the two rolled over and over among the seats, but the circus men promptly put them both out.

We will pass over the events of the time which was required for the completion of the Electric Team, saying only that Moreland and his servant Mohammed remained at Frank, Jr.'s house, and that the doctor was a guest there every day.

Finally the day arrived when Frank, Jr., announced that the Electric Team and the conveyance it was to draw was entirely complete.

The entire household went out to the shop to see the wonderful conveyance and witness a trial of its merits.

They beheld before them two splendid steeds of metal caparisoned with a metallic harness, and attached to a vehicle that was in some respects like an ordinary coach, and in others like an English tally-ho.

The coach was constructed so that at will the windows could be closed by means of metallic perforated slides which insured ventilation.

The top of the coach was provided with seats beside the driver's box. One of these was at the rear and the other at the front of the remarkable vehicle.

The driver's box was quite high and directly underneath the footboard was a great globe for the electric light. When this light was turned on a flood of the most brilliant illumination would be reflected over the wonderful metallic team and far ahead and all around.

The vehicle was constructed with wonderful skill in every part. It was placed upon four wheels which were provided with very broad steel tires so that they could not easily sink in soft soil. The box of the coach was supported upon massive springs of tempered steel placed directly over the front and rear axles.

There was a row of port-holes in each side of the coach and also in the back. These port-holes were adjustable and could be readily closed when desired.

The hubs of the wheels were fitted with short, sharp double-edged steel swords, which could be removed by simply unscrewing them. In this respect the remarkable coach was not unlike an ancient Roman chariot.

The top of the coach was surrounded with a rail, and there was an open space between the seat behind the driver's box and the rear seat.

This open space was really a sliding-door, and by pulling a lever placed directly between the two seats the roof of the coach could thus be instantly opened, and if on the top, one could readily descend to the interior.

Frank threw open one of the side doors of the coach, and his friend saw that the interior was neatly padded and cushioned, and that there was also a storage place which would hold everything needed for a long journey. The wheels were very high, and the great body of the coach that hung between them, under the floor of the interior, was a spacious storage compartment, to which ready access could be obtained by means of sliding doors.

The seats of the coach, moreover, could be unfolded, thus forming excellent bunks, and there was a small water tank in the boot behind the rear wheels.

The body of the coach directly under the driver's seat was a closed iron-plated compartment, and there were stored the powerful batteries which generated the electricity, which was the motive power of the Electric Team. These batteries need not all be in use at a time, for they were three in number. In case one was destroyed another could be promptly connected with the mechanical attachments of the Electric Team.

A series of polished lever handles numbered so that no mistake could be made by one who knew the meaning of the figures, was placed in a metallic shelf over the electric magazine.

These levers controlled the motive power of the invention, and by means of them the mystic current of miraculous power could be sent to the electric team of metal.

Running from the batteries were a number of slender wires and small steel rods which connected with the intricate clock-work like machinery placed further forward.

The centers of the axletrees were provided with pistonrod attachments, with two elbows by which the propelling power of the team could be augmented.

A hammer of steel rested on a silver globe over the batteries, and Frank, Jr., said:

"This is our bell, see how I ring it."

Thus speaking, he touched an electric button marked "B" and the hammer was lifted on a pivot, and it began to fall upon the silver globe with regular strokes until Frank removed his finger from the button. The tone of the bell was singularly loud and clear. It could be heard for a long distance.

Turning to a handle in the wall of the coach, Frank, Jr., slowly depressed it, whereupon a folding sectional pole, like a fireman's sliding sectional ladder, ran up from the top of the coach to a height of fifty feet, one section above the other. At the top of this was an electric globe, and a light could be displayed from that globe that could be seen for miles, even when intervening objects shut out the main light on the front of the coach.

Upon the top of the vehicle, placed on a pivot near the rear seat over which it could be pointed, was a small cannon, to which Frank, Jr., next called attention.

Surrounding the exterior of the vehicle was a double row of metallic bands, which offered the only hold by which any outside party could lay hands upon the coach.

With these bands wires connected the electrical battery, so that a current could be sent around the vehicle like a flash, and deal a terrible shock to any person or thing in contact with the metallic bands.

"You will observe," said Frank, Jr., when he had explained this last feature, "that the entire coach is bullet proof. And now we will more particularly observe the Electric Team."

"The wires from the electric battery run through the metal traces and made connection with the machinery placed inside the metallic bellies of the horses. The intricate machinery occupies a great part of the space between the forelegs and the hind ones. The power is applied, of course, by means of the jointed iron rods running up and down the hollow limbs, which give in every respect a natural motion. In fact, these electric horses move just like live ones, only the electric battery is the life in this case, and they never tire."

"I see you all grasp the idea of the mechanical parts of the invention, and so I will not trouble you with much more minute description. But I must add that in the heads of the horses I have arranged a clockwork machine that feed magnesium wire to a lamp that is set between a polished reflector and the glass eyes of each horse. So if I desire I can at any time flash a powerful light from the eyes of the team."

"The animals are sharp shod so that they cannot slip, and I can back or turn them at will. Moreover the rear axle works on a pivot to facilitate rapid turning."

"We shall carry a suit of chain armor for each member of our party, and the armor will be worn when we expose ourselves on the top of the coach in dangerous localities. The steel armor is impervious to bullets and arrows."

Frank paused, and after all had expressed their admiration he added:

"The motive power from the battery can be imparted from the driver's seat by depressing the bar which rises at the side of it. But the power can be controlled from the inside of the vehicle also."

Frank's friends were now most anxious to start, and so, after a trial of the new invention, which proved that it was indeed a complete success, it was taken apart, securely packed in cases especially made for it, and shipped to New York.

The exploring party followed by rail, and in New York they were fortunate enough to secure passage for Calcutta on an American trading steamer, which was to sail in a few days. The great invention was placed on board, and on the day of sailing a large crowd assembled on the wharf to bid the explorers Godspeed. The "International Geographical and Historical Association" turned out in full force, and amid ringing cheers and the waving of innumerable handkerchiefs, Frank, Jr., and his friends steamed away down the bay.

The events of the long voyage to Calcutta were not of a particularly interesting nature. No storm occurred, and the American party arrived safely at Calcutta, having made a remarkably quick voyage.

Barney and Pomp were delighted to set foot on land again, as, indeed, were all the others, and they lost no time in putting together the coach and the Electric Team. They had brought with them a large variety of supplies, scientific instruments, fire-arms, ammunition, and almost everything they thought they could possibly need, so there were but few purchases to make in Calcutta. In five days the explorers were ready to start on their search for the missing man. And they left Calcutta before daylight one pleasant morning, so as to avoid the annoyance of a crowd which would otherwise have been sure to follow them. Frank

had secured a passport from the English authorities which gave him liberty to travel anywhere in "British India."

At the close of the first day's journey through a fine fertile country, our explorers found themselves in a jungle on the old Nagpoor road. The young inventor had just turned off the electricity and brought the team to a halt, intending to camp where they were, when Pomp and Barney, who had been absent in the jungle for a few moments in search of game, came bounding back uttering cries of alarm. They reached the coach and gained its top just as two enormous full-grown tigers bounded out of the jungle. For a moment the splendid animals crouched before the metal team as if about to leap upon them, and so gain the top of the coach.

The electric light fell full upon the great East Indian tigers as they crouched for their leap, and realizing the danger, Frank, Jr., snatched up a rifle, which was on the top of the coach, and leveled it over the front seat at the jungle terrors.

At the same time, Pomp, the black dead shot, sprang to Frank's side rifle in hand and also took careful aim at the tigers.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DANGER ON THE JUNGLE ROAD.

FOR an instant the two magnificent tigers remained crouching before the Electric Team, slowly waving their tails to and fro while they imparted a sinuous movement to their great, muscular bodies. The great size and brilliant markings of the gold and black monsters told that they were full grown, and the fierce, hungry light in their flashing yellow eyes would have informed an old jungle hunter that they were "man-eaters"—that they had previously tasted human blood.

Frank Reade and Pomp had time enough to take a deliberate aim at the tigers, but Frank cried:

"Jump off the back of the coach and secure the breech-loader I left on the ground, Moreland. Draw a bead on the left hand tiger."

Moreland had come to Frank's side, and the succeeding moment Frank and the young traveler simultaneously pulled the triggers of their weapons. But the tigers leaped at the same time, and only Frank's weapon was discharged.

The trusty rifle in Moreland's hand had failed, while the tiger at which Frank had aimed fell backward, shot through the brain, and tore up the jungle turf with his great claws in the last desperate throes. While he uttered an awful roar of agony, his mate gained the back of one of the electric steeds.

"Worra! worra! it's goners we are, sure!" yelled Barney, and he leaped forward, sprang the door in the top of the remarkable vehicle and disappeared inside, where Dr. Vaneyke and Mohammed were when the tigers appeared.

Barney had discharged the last shot in his rifle before he and Pomp came running from the jungle, pursued by the tigers, and he dropped inside the coach to reload.

The situation of Frank Reade and Moreland was for a moment one of extreme peril.

As the tiger which had gained the back of one of the metal horses clung there for a moment, seeking to gain a foot-hold for a leap to the top of the coach, neither Frank nor Moreland lost their presence of mind.

Almost instantly Moreland leveled his repeating rifle. The cause of its failure first was a projecting cartridge in the cylinder; and this the young man had quickly removed.

Then, with the celerity of thought, and before Frank could discharge another shot, Moreland fired, and this time he fully proved his skill as a marksman. His bullet reached the heart of the tiger and the huge beast leaped into the air and fell with a thud upon the ground beside its mate.

Barney and the others appeared on the top of the coach as the second tiger fell, and as he saw the two tigers lying dead in the *saput* grass of the jungle, Mohammed exclaimed:

"Sahib, you are a mighty hunter, and the master also!" For once Mohammed was startled out of his habitual silence, and as he spoke he salaamed profoundly.

"Sure an' it's right yez are. Bedad the ugly bastes chased Pomp an' mesel' out av' the woods beyant loike they was after makin' a faste av' us," said Barney.

Then all the party descended to the ground and examined the dead tigers.

"They are splendid specimens certainly," said the doctor in admiration.

"So they are," assented Frank, "and we'll remove their skins and preserve them as trophies. Just then a strange groaning sound was heard, which emanated from the adjacent jungle.

"Be the powers av' turf, there's more av' the striped creatures a-comin' O'm thinkin'!" cried Barney.

"No," replied Mohammed, smiling. "It is the cry of a monkey you hear."

"Sure and O'm glad to hear that. It's dyin' O'm am fur a bit av' a ruction. But, be the harp av' Tara, O! draw the line at tigers. But Mister Mohammed, would yez have the illigant politeness to join me in a bit av' a toast?" said Barney, drawing forth a bottle of whisky.

"No! no!" replied Mohammed, for like all good Hindoos, he abjured all intoxicating liquors.

Barney grinned as he said:

"Faith, an' there's no accountin' for tastes. Be the powers av' turf, it's the milk av' human kindness is a wee drop av' rale ould mountain dew."

And Barney drank with a relish and gusto which proved that he was quite sincere.

Pomp was engaged in removing the skins of the tigers. But the smell of the whisky made his mouth water, and he coughed significantly as Barney smacked his lips after drinking. But the jolly Irishman did not seem to hear him.

"Gollie, it's a mean man dat drinks alone. Dat's what's de matter," muttered Pomp.

"Fat's that! Begob, is the nagur spakin' loike that av' an' Irish gentleman? Sure, it's a foight yez are after. Be me soul, O'm a peaceful mon, but whin yez insult a Clonykilly lad, it manes a bit av' a shindy. Whoop! Pale yerself, nagur, an' it's mesel' as will wipe the turf wid yez!" cried Barney, throwing off his coat.

"You'll do nothing of the kind. Go and bring some dry wood for a camp-fire," said Frank, sternly.

Barney went off muttering, but suddenly he be-thought himself that he had left his flask in his coat, and he turned around just in time to see Pomp draining it. The darky had promptly secured the flask while Barney's back was turned.

Then Barney was mad, and he gave a real Donnybrook yell and rushed at Pomp. The two came together before Frank could interpose, and the next moment the darky "ducked" his head and butted Barney in the pit of the stomach.

Over went the belligerent fellow, and he did not want to fight any more.

A camp-fire was soon kindled, and as the travelers were provided with cooking utensils and all kinds of food a savory meal was soon prepared, which all partook of with excellent appetites.

At a late hour all hands retired inside the coach. They were pretty well tired out with travel, and so it was decided that they would spend the night where they were.

Frank said he would stand watch the first part of the night, for, although they were not in a hostile neighborhood, they were aware that danger always lurked upon the lonely jungle roads.

Bands of native robbers, and the terrible Phansigars, or stranglers of India, frequented the highways of travel in that portion of India, and despite the efforts which the British authorities had made to stamp out the secret assassins of the jungle, they still perpetrated their outrages from time to time in the parts of the province remote from the centers of English power.

The young inventor's party had encountered no travelers on the road that day save a party of "fakirs," bound for the fair at Jagpore, and they had no special reason to anticipate immediate danger. But experience had taught Frank always to be on his guard in a strange country.

Frank placed himself beside the main inside lever, which communicated with the great electric battery which propelled his wonderful electric team, and, while his comrades soon slept, he was alert and vigilant.

The doors of the coach were closed, but on account of the sultry atmosphere the windows were open, the perforated metallic guards having been pushed entirely aside to obtain ventilation.

The moon looked down upon the vast expanse of jungle and forest, and strange and grotesque shadows fell among the ruins of one of those ancient reservoirs which had been erected in the days of the moguls, now visible at the roadside.

Tall trees grew out of dense thickets and the night-birds fluttered above their foliage, monkeys chattered to each other in the thickets, and occasionally the cry of the jackal came from afar. But the night was beautiful, and the peaceful evening scene did not fail to impress the young inventor, while he fell into a reverie of the future, and wondered if he should succeed in finding the missing man, who was lost in Central Asia.

All at once Frank was aroused by seeing a moving shadow on the edge of the thicket.

Instantly he grasped his repeating rifle, and without a sound he drew further back from the open window, and watched the shadow as it glided along until it paused opposite the Electric Team.

A moment elapsed, and Frank's interest and apprehension were intensified as he saw a native steal out of the jungle.

The man was followed by two comrades. They were naked save for their short waist trousers and the turbans on their heads, and their swarthy

bodies glistened in the moonlight, showing that they were smeared with oil.

Each man carried a curved dagger of native manufacture in his girdle, and their faces were alight with an expression of expectancy and ferocity.

Frank thought of the stranglers, the dreaded Phansigars who made traveling in that part of India so dangerous, and he fancied the night prowlers of the jungle meditated a secret attack on his party.

But still remaining perfectly silent, Frank continued to observe the movements of the mysterious trio.

Suddenly one of their number glided forward toward the coach as stealthily as one of the deadly East Indian serpents could have done.

The other three remained where they were.

"I'll capture this fellow when he gets near enough," thought Frank, and he permitted the native to approach until he was close beside the coach.

"I shall see if my brothers were right. Ah, Kallee has sent him into our power if he is here," muttered the native in the faintest whisper, which was really an almost inaudible murmur, but which Frank's exceedingly acute sense of hearing enabled him to hear.

"Who can the fellow mean? Whom does he seek?" thought Frank, mystified and wondering.

Not a sound save the heavy breathing of the sleepers inside the coach came to the native's ears, and reaching up he secured a hold upon the window sills, which enabled him to draw himself up until his eye came upon a level with the opening.

Then he looked searchingly into the coach, but Frank was now leaning back as though sound asleep, and the shadows prevented the spy discovering that his eyes were half open.

The moonlight fell full upon the face of Mohammed, and as the glance of the native fell upon the face of the sleeping Hindoo he gave a start, while a look of exultation and satisfaction came upon his dark and evil features.

Then he silently dropped to the ground.

"It is he—it is Mohammed! I will return with my brothers, and we shall strangle all these men of the race who have wrested our native land from us, and Mohammed shall become our prisoner," murmured the native almost under his breath.

Frank was about to cover him with his rifle and order him to stand, when Mohammed suddenly awoke from a troubled dream, and uttered an exclamation in the Hindoo tongue as he turned over and closed his eyes again.

Like a flash the native darted away.

He gained the jungle, and vanished into its cover with his comrades before Frank scarcely realized that he was gone.

Frank did not awaken his comrades.

"Let the rascals go. When Barney relieves me at midnight I'll tell him to be particularly watchful," thought Frank.

But the night passed, and when morning dawned Barney, who had watched the last half of the night, said he had seen nothing of the Phansigars.

Then Frank told all the party of the night's singular occurrence.

"Begob, Masther Frank, an' why didn't yez gently whisper in me ear that the heathen spalpeens was near? Sure an' it's an illigant chance for a ruction I've lost. Be me soul, it's crackin' av' the blackguards' heads O'd like to have done," said Barney.

But although Mohammed did not say a word, Frank and the others observed that his bronzed face assumed a grayish pallor.

It was quite evident that the Hindoo experienced the greatest apprehension.

Presently, when the journey northward toward the frontier of Afghanistan was resumed, and while the wonderful Electric Team was proceeding quite swiftly along the jungle road, Frank said to Moreland, who sat with him on the driver's seat:

"I wonder why the Phansigars are so anxious to make Mohammed a prisoner?"

"I do not know?" replied Moreland. "Have you asked him?" "Yes. But he evaded an explanation, saying the Phansigars had been the enemies of his family for years."

"And you obtained nothing more explicit from him?"

"No, I saw that he did not wish to talk upon the subject, and so I did not press him further."

"It's a strange affair. By the way, how did Mohammed first come to enter your service?"

"I found him a fugitive in Central Asia far from his native land. He was starving and I gave him food. He told me he had been sold into slavery among the Afghans, who had raided over the frontier of Hindoostan and carried him away into captivity."

"And after that you kept him with you?"

"Yes, and I found him devoted to me. I had are anxious for a shot at them."

"All right," assented Frank, and presently he reversed the electric lever and stopped the team.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE HIDDEN TEMPLE.

It was wonderful how those splendid, mechanical steeds of metal gradually came to a standstill, precisely as though they were really living, breathing horses.

Frank slowly turned off the mystic current from the batteries, and with the gradual subsidence of the subtle motive power the magnificent horses, footfalls became slower and slower, until they saved his life, but later on he repaid the debt."

"How was that?"

"He was with me in the fight with the Afghans, in which Captain Jack Conway fell, and when Richard Carlyle was made a prisoner. But for Mohammed's bravery I should have been slain."

"He is a quiet, peaceful-appearing fellow. Not in the least like a hero."

"True, but he is brave, as you may yet see for yourself."

The doctor joined Frank and Moreland, just then, and said:

"I suggest that we halt in the shade until the heat of mid-day is passed. There seems to be plenty of small game about, and Pomp and Barney stood like majestic equine statues, standing like monuments to the wondrous genius of the young American inventor.

The Electric Team was halted under the grateful shade of a grove of *teak* and ironwood trees that towered in the air a hundred feet and more.

Beyond the jungle became dense, and the tall *saput* grass, parched and yellow, lay under the burning sun amid the bushes. To the west every now and then a little glade presented itself to view running into the jungle.

The sound of the approach of the electric conveyance had started up a flock of antelopes in one of these glades, and the beautiful little animals were seen trotting briskly away into the cover.

"Sure, an' it's steak we'll have for dinner!" cried Barney, as he saw the antelopes.

Then as soon as the Electric Team came to a halt he and Pomp took up their rifles and started in pursuit of game.

They had both forgotten their recent little misunderstanding, and they were on the best of terms again.

"Look out for tigers!" called out Frank warningly as the two jolly comrades hurried away.

"And look out for men more to be dreaded than tigers!" said Mohammed in Hindoo.

Barney and Pomp soon disappeared in a *tope* or grove beyond the interglade.

"Bedad thim Injia deer can run like the wind, bad scan to thim. It's speedin' we'll have to do if we get a shot at thim," said Barney.

Pomp assented and the two ran swiftly.

But the antelope is one of the most fleet-footed animals in existence and the chase was a long one.

Pomp and Barney were not easily to be discouraged though, and they pressed on for mile after mile.

Soon they were in the very heart of the jungle, which was of vast extent.

And still they had not once succeeded in getting within range of the antelopes.

Monkeys chattered at the disappointed hunters from the leafy covers among the branches, and their little ugly faces looked down at them for all the world as though they were jeering at their failure. The impish creatures annoyed Barney very much.

"Bad luck til the chatterin' apes!" he cried a last, "but I'll silence some av thim."

Barney raised his rifle, but just then Pomp caught his arm.

"Fat do yez mane? Bedad an' yez spoilt me aim at that ugly devil in the fork av the tree be-yant," said Barney.

"Hole yar breff, Irish, an' doan' got yar back up. I done tole yar dat I heard suffin' suah," replied Pomp, excitedly.

"Listen til the nagur! Bedad, yez have no sense at all, at all. Isn't the woods full av noises?"

"But I heard de voices ob men. Dat's what I means."

"Arrah! whist, thin. Where did the voice come from, Pomp, me jewel?"

"Right ahead dar."

Pomp pointed as he spoke.

"Faith, an' it may be thim blackguards that cum nosin' around the night," said Barney.

"Dat am so."

"Faith, an' we'll stale forward foreninst the bushes yonder, and see if we can find out who is there."

"Dat's all right."

"Arrah! Oi' fale it in me bones, Pomp, that we

are to hav' a bit av' a ruction wid the blackguards at last. Shades av Donnybrook, but if there's one av the greasy devils that will tread on the tail av me coat, O'll bate the head av' him!"

"Doan you be so previous 'bout a row; I gebber seed sich a Irishher. Some day you'se agwine to git youse own cocoanut smashed, I done tole yer."

Creeping stealthily forward, followed by Pomp, Barney presently parted the bushes of a dense jungle-growth, and glanced ahead through the interstices.

Then, upon the Irishman's vision dawned a singular scene, and one which he and Pomp beheld in amazement.

Just before them was an open space in the jungle less than half an acre in extent, and in the center of this clearing stood a strange structure.

It was shaped somewhat like a Chinese pagoda, and the roof was like that of a Turkish mosque.

A flight of steps led to a door, and Barney said, after gazing at the building for a moment:

"Bedad, an' Oi'm affther thinkin' it's wan 'av the heathen stanglers' hidden temples, av which we have heard Master Frank an' the doctor talkin'."

"Golli! I specs you'se right," assented Pomp.

"An Irishmon is never wrong. Now begob Oi'm a-go in to see the inside av the house. These nagurs have gould images, Oi'm told, an' bedad, Pomp, we'll carry off wan av thim if we can lift it."

"Dat's jess like youse. You won't take nuffin' you can't kerry, Barney."

"Shut up, ye nagur, or Oi'll— Begob there's one av the blackguards now."

At the instant a hideous East Indian appeared in the door of the temple.

He was very old, and a white robe or *poncho* hung from his shoulders.

Had Barney and Pomp been more conversant with the manners and customs of the jungle tribe, to which the Phansigars belong, they would have known that the aged native was a priest of Kallee—the goddess of the stranglers of India.

The old priest made gestures which were precisely as though he was signaling Barney and Pomp to approach. But in reality he was invoking the aid of the sun for one of the mystic rites of the temple.

"Bedad," said Barney, "the ould feller has seen us an' he is darin' av us out. Sure, an' Barney O'Shea is not the man to take a dare from an ould blackguard like that!"

With these words Barney strutted out of the thicket.

The old Phansigar priest uttered a startled cry as he beheld the stranger, whose presence he had not even suspected, and then he cried in the Thuggee dialect:

"*Ishee soughn ah gham!*"

"Bedad, he calls me an Irish son av a gun!" roared Barney, and indeed the strange words uttered by the old priest did have very much the sound of the expression the hot-headed Irishman mistook them for.

Barney was mad then.

"Be the powers Oi'll show yez if Oi am an Irish son of a gun!" he cried.

Then he threw off his coat and started up the stairs.

"Shtand up til me face, ye dhirty blackguard, an' it's mesel' as will paralyze yez in a whisk av Widdy McGee's goat's tail," Barney went on.

"Come back! Dar am more ob dem fellers inside, an' dey will cut yah deep, Barney, suah as you is born!" cried Pomp, warningly.

He had caught sight of several dark faces at a window of the temple at which the old priest stood.

But Barney did not heed Pomp's warning in the least.

On the contrary, the foolhardy fellow went prancing up the steps of the temple, where, according to the faith of the strange jungle-dwellers, it is death for one not of their religion to venture.

But Barney was ignorant that by ascending the steps he had committed a grievous sacrilege against the mythical goddess worshiped by the Phansigars.

The old priest stood his ground, while in a loud voice he addressed some commands to the devotees within the temple.

At the same time he gesticulated excitedly.

"Orah! ye are a game ould blackguard, but all Oi ax av yez is to stand forninst me for the space av one illigant second," cried Barney.

He had arrived at the head of the steps, and he was just about to make a rush at the old Phansigar.

But all at once the temple door opened, and out rushed six lithe, muscular, almost naked jungle-men.

The entire band precipitated themselves upon Barney and he found that he was overmatched.

He had thrown aside his gun preparatory to engaging in a fistic bout with the old Phansigar, and

his swarthy adversaries had him at a decided disadvantage.

But Barney knew how to use his fists, though he preferred his shillalah, and he struck out straight from the shoulder in lively style.

Two of the natives went down, and then the others closed with the brave Irishman.

But their almost naked bodies were smeared with oil to such an extent as to cause Barney's hands to slip every time he tried to grasp them, and they were dragging him down, when he shouted:

"Lind a hand here, Pomp. Bedad, the heathens are as slippery as glass, an' it's no ould I can git on the blackguards!"

Pomp was already hastening to Barney's assistance, and a couple of leaps now brought him to the top of the steps, and he swung his clubbed rifle and knocked Barney's assailants over right and left.

In a moment Barney was at liberty, but more of the natives were heard coming from the interior, and so the two brave fellows concluded that in this instance discretion was the better part of valor, and they beat a hasty retreat.

Barney and Pomp fled into the jungle, and in a few moments a score of the Phansigars who issued forth from the hidden temple were in pursuit of them.

In their haste to escape, Barney and Pomp fled heedless of the course they were taking.

They could hear their enemies calling to each other in strange, shrill tones as they followed them.

But Barney and his comrade finally eluded pursuit, and when at last no further sounds from the Phansigars were heard for some time, they came to a halt.

They were well nigh exhausted, but they soon regained their breath, and proceeded, as they supposed, in the direction of the Electric Team.

Storm clouds had obscured the face of the sun, however, during the last half hour, and they no longer had the luminary of day to guide their course by.

And it chanced that they wandered on and on till night fell, and still they had not reached the jungle road, or found the Electric Team.

Then Barney and Pomp were compelled to acknowledge to themselves that they were lost in the trackless jungle.

"It's a bad scrape we are into, be mesoul, Pomp, an' I've only one idee that kin be affther helpin' av us. If Masther Frank will only run up the electric signal light we may see it," said Barney.

"Dat's so; but we muss go ahead. No use to stan' still yere," replied Pomp.

They wandered on for some time further, and the darkness of the night became complete.

All at once they heard a shrill tiger call. It was a good imitation, but the two lost men knew it was uttered by a human voice. The first jungle signal was answered by another, and then another, and so on the tiger calls came from every direction until it seemed to the wanderers that their enemies were all around them and that they were completely hemmed in.

It was a situation well calculated to cause the stoutest heart a tremor of fear, but side by side Barney and Pomp advanced.

Presently they ascended a mound-like hill, and then afar like a great luminous star above the jungle growth they beheld a brilliant light.

"Whoop! The electric signal light! Bedad, Master Frank has run up the full length of the sectional pole. Now for the light, Pomp, me jewel!" cried Barney.

He dashed forward and Pomp kept at his side. But now the Phansigars who had stealthily tracked and surrounded them began to close in.

Through the opposing ranks of their dusky foes who now became visible, Barney and Pomp dashed like a tornado, discharging their rifles as they went, and then clubbing them and dealing blows right and left.

They passed the enemy; safely through them their furious charge carried them, and then began a wild and thrilling race for life.

Barney and Pomp went crashing through the jungle, and after them came the enraged and persistent Phansigars in hot pursuit.

But out of the jungle into the road Barney and the darky burst ahead of the natives.

They beheld the Electric Team just ahead with the signal light up to the highest point, and they saw that all the inventor's party were on the coach and ready for an immediate start.

"Quick! Quick!" shouted Frank Reade as he saw Barney and Pomp emerge from the thicket.

A few swift leaps carried the two fugitives to the coach, and they leaped upon it. The enemy at the same time sprang into view.

Frank had not yet turned on the light of the great electric lamp under the dashboard in the front of the remarkable vehicle, but he now suddenly did so, and like a flash a great bar of vivid

light fell full in the faces of the astounded natives. They were frightened. But only for a moment did they pause and manifest alarm. They were pressing forward when Frank suddenly worked the bell-lever and sent the electricity flashing along to the intricate mechanical contrivance connected with the hammer which served for the tongue of the great bell globe. At once the bell pealed forth in quick resounding strokes like a fire alarm.

Again the Phansigars paused, and then Frank coolly turned on the full force of the main electric battery and started the metal steeds.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A GREAT FIGHT IN JAGPORE.

THE Phansigars, however, were still disposed to follow the coach. It must be remembered that these men were not uncivilized, as far as a knowledge of the ways of white men were concerned. Long contact with the British, who had made a conquest of India, had served to familiarize them with the achievements of the Europeans.

Many of the Phansigars were no doubt familiar with the English language, and some of them frequently visited the settlements in the guise of travelers or merchants.

It has always been the policy of the dreaded sect of the stranglers to preserve the secret of the identity of the members of their murderous order since the Indian mutiny or "Sepoy rebellion," as it is sometimes called, for since that time, the British government of India has outlawed the Phansigars.

Thus the reader must understand that the explorers were not dealing with untutored savages, such as they had often encountered in other parts of the world, and so it was not to be expected that they could be so easily terrified.

Frank Reade fully understood all this, and as the jungle dwellers continued to follow the coach, instead of putting on full speed and immediately distancing them, he presently slowed up.

"I should like to teach those rascals a lesson for the future," said Frank to Dr. Vaneyske.

"Yes, it would be advisable to do so," assented the doctor.

"For then, convinced that we could not be meddled with with impunity, they would be less likely to try to make us further trouble," said Moreland.

"But the question is what shall I do?" said Frank, reflectively.

"Well, whatever is done must surpass the trickery of the native jugglers to make the impression on the minds of the Phansigars which we desire," said Moreland.

"Let me see. What scientific appliance have we that we can turn to account now?" put in the doctor.

"I have it!" exclaimed Frank.

"What?" asked Moreland.

"An idea for a trick on the stranglers that will suit our purpose."

"What is it? See, the natives are coming nearer. We must do something at once or run for it."

"I'll try the leyden jars," said Frank.

"Good!" exclaimed Moreland, catching the idea.

"Excellent!" cried the doctor. "We charged them yesterday."

"That's so, and now we need lose no time," replied Frank.

Quite fortunately, among the electric supplies and a large variety of scientific appliances among the stores the inventor's party had brought with them, were a dozen leyden jars.

As our readers are aware, when charged with electricity a leyden jar is an instrument which can be rendered explosive by fully charging it with electricity, and yet it can be handled without danger as long as one does not make the circuit of the electric current by touching the tube connected with the interior and the outside surface at once.

Leaving the doctor to manage the guiding levers of the batteries, Frank descended into the interior of the coach, sprang the door in the floor and drew forth a box of the leyden jars, which he passed to Moreland upon the roof, and then followed himself. The team was almost stopped, and Frank lowered the box of seemingly harmless jars to the ground, and then the electric team increased its speed a trifle, as an accession of electricity was turned on.

The natives soon came to the case on the ground, and, after eying it a little suspiciously, they began to take out the jars.

Then bang! bang! bang! bang! they went.

Every jar exploded, shattering the glass, and knocking over the man who held it as though he had been stricken by lightning.

"Whoop! Hurrah! Frank Reade, the champion young janus forever and Erin go bragh! Be dad, luck at him nagurs knocked over like tin-pins! Set 'em up in the other alley! All down in this! Arrah, Pomp, ye blackguard, why don't yez yell?" shouted Barney in delight.

He brought his hand down on Pomp's shoulder with a resounding thump, and pulled out his whisky flask and offered it to Mohammed, saying: "Take a drink, old chap, an', begorra, we won't count it!"

Mohammed turned away with a look of disgust, saying:

"The strong drink steals away the brains. None or me!"

"But a trifle for me! Here's bad luck to the nagurs!" said Barney, and he poured the fiery stuff down his throat as if it had been water.

Then the speed of the Electric Team was increased, and the Phansigars were quickly out of sight and left behind.

But the explosion of the jars had caused the junglemen to halt, and they would no longer continue the pursuit, although urged to do so by their leader, who was the same man who had come and recognized Mohammed the night before while the latter slept.

The following day passed uneventfully, but the second day the Electric Team met a caravan of traders from the north bound for Jagpore, and these men reported that recent heavy rains, confined to the north, had flooded the plains on the frontier, and that the river would be impassable for several days.

"Since delay cannot be avoided I propose we turn aside and run to the City of Jagpore and see the sights," said Frank Reade, after hearing the report of the merchants of the caravan.

All assented, although they were very anxious to get to the Afghan country, and seek to find the trail of Richard Carlyle the missing explorer.

The course of the Electric Team was changed, and while the merchants of the caravan watched it in mingled wonder and awe, the greatest of all modern mechanical triumphs sped swiftly away.

Mohammed knew the country well.

Under his guidance the city of Jagpore was soon reached, for over the well made main northern road to the ancient East Indian City, Frank Reade's Electric Team made splendid time.

Jagpore was crowded with people from all parts of the surrounding country, and before the Electric Team entered the city Mohammed requested that while his friends were in the native city he might remain concealed in the coach.

This request was readily granted, and Mohammed took his place inside. The blinds were closed, and he was safe from observation.

As soon as the news of the arrival of the strangers reached the native "Rajah," as Indian princes are called, he sent our friends an invitation to attend the Amphitheater to witness a wild beast show which was to be given that very day.

At the appointed time Frank Reade and all his party except Barney and Mohammed entered the building in which the show was held. The Amphitheater was packed with people in rows upon the seats placed one above the other, and the arena in the center was separated from the audience by high palisades of bamboo. The rajah occupied a box in the center of the front circle, above the arena. At one end of the ring, opposite the rajah, was a door through which the small animals and performers entered. Opposite this entrance was a great, high door, through which elephants could pass.

Just as Frank Reade and his companions took their seats in the front row next the arena the show began.

Serpent charmers first gave an exhibition with their great snakes, then came the educated monkeys, wonderful talking parrots, educated jackals, racing antelopes and elephants, whose intelligence was surprising. But finally the event of the day was announced, and a magnificent young Hindoo athlete entered the arena, carrying a naked sword and clad in a fine chain-armor waist, while a shield of tanned bullock's hide was on his left arm. The master of the arena announced that Wolandah, the tiger-tamer, would now engage, single-handed, in a battle with a wild tiger, which he would conquer and slay before the audience.

There was a moment of breathless silence. Then the small door of the arena opened and through it bounded a magnificent tiger.

Wolandah approached the savage beast warily as it crouched in the center of the arena, as though meditating a spring.

The excitement of the audience was intense. Suddenly the tiger leaped. Wolandah dodged and struck the brute with his sword. Then a wonderful combat followed, but it ended in the triumph of Wolandah, who was a marvel of courage and strength. He slew the tiger, and a burst of applause that made the building ring went up from the vast audience.

A moment later Frank Reade heard a Parsee merchant, who was seated near him, say to his companion.

"I'll wager the rajah is angry. I think he secretly hoped that Wolandah would be killed, for you

know it is whispered that he is the real heir to the throne of Jagpore."

Wolandah had turned, and he was bowing himself out of the arena, when the rajah sprang to his feet and shouted to the master of the show:

"That man must not go yet. He is a trickster. His tiger was drugged so he could not fight well. He shall meet my two royal tigers at once, and we shall see what he can do now."

"But, rajah, the man is weary. He has made a good fight. It would be murder," ventured the master of the arena, while Wolandah turned pale as he faced the rajah and shouted:

"You seek to kill me, usurper. You fear I will drive you from the throne which belongs to me, coward!"

"Turn in the tigers! Your own heads shall pay the forfeit if you refuse," fairly shrieked the rajah to his men, for he was mad with rage.

"Good heavens! what a monster the rajah is. Wolandah is a noble fellow, and I'm going to take his part. We wear our mail armors, and if it comes to the worst we can make a great fight," said Frank Reade.

Then, as he heard his comrades assent, he leaped to his feet and addressed the rajah, saying:

"This must not be!"

"Silence! Guards, place the European and his comrades under arrest!" thundered the rajah.

"I guess not," cried Frank. "Come on, fellows, and we'll get out with Wolandah, who is making for the big door in the arena." He leaped into the arena followed by all but Pomp, who was then discovered to be missing.

Frank and Moreland and the doctor reached Wolandah's side, and the former had barely time to assure the tiger-tamer that they were his friends, when the small door of the arena opened and two of the largest and most savage tigers living were admitted.

Wolandah tried the great door, then he exclaimed:

"They have fastened the large door! We must fight the tigers for our lives!"

But at that instant, as the tigers were making at our friends the great door went down with a crash, and into the ring dashed the Electric Team, with Pomp and Barney on the box. The coach wheeled in the center of the ring. Our friends and Wolandah leaped aboard, and the electric conveyance dashed away through the great doors at full speed.

But instant pursuit by the rajah's native guards was ordered, and our travelers had not gone far when they came to a great open trench beyond the city and were compelled to stop. Then the natives began a fierce attack. Frank, Barney and Pomp leaped to the ground and leveled their guns, while the doctor and Moreland covered the crowd from the top of the coach.

It was a terrible moment of peril.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ELECTRIC GLOVE.

THE night was almost come when the Electric Team dashed out of the great amphitheater in the city of Jagpore, and when Frank Reade was compelled to stop the electric steeds, on account of the open trench upon which the wonderful conveyance had come, after leaving the city, the shadows of darkness were falling fast.

But the rajah's guards hemmed in the explorers' vehicle on all sides, and, of course, the trench, which it seemed had been opened to lay the water pipes of the city, was impassable.

Wolandah, the tiger king, and claimant of the throne of the native prince of Jagpore, had rather mysteriously disappeared from the coach during the flight from the amphitheater, and none of Frank Reade's party had observed his departure.

The situation of the young American inventor and his comrades was one of the greatest peril, and in the event of their capture by the rajah's guards they could only fear the worst.

They had defied the authority of the native prince, and saved the life of one whom he both hated and feared. Naturally, if it was in his power to compass the destruction of the foreigners the rajah would not hesitate.

And even while the native guards were closing in upon the Electric Team, the rajah was fuming with rage and issuing orders looking to the prevention of Frank Reade's escape from the province of Jagpore, even if the intrepid young inventor succeeded in eluding the immediate pursuit which had been promptly instituted.

Couriers were dispatched from the city of Jagpore in hot haste, with orders to see that all the highways of travel leading to the frontier of the province of Jagpore were guarded, and that "the foreign interlopers" were arrested if they attempted to cross the lines.

The rajah brought the serious accusation of treason against the American party, and he moreover, at once dispatched a message to the British

"Resident" of Jagpore, setting forth that Frank Reade and his comrades had joined the ranks of the insurgents, who were plotting to place Wolandah upon the throne.

This the wily rajah deemed necessary because the British government keeps a minister at the court of every prince in India, called the "Resident," whose office it is to watch the doings of the natives, and report if there is any danger to British power brewing among them.

Though nominally independent, all these princes pay tribute to Calcutta, and the power of the Resident is almost unlimited, although his orders are always put in the form of "advice" or "requests" to the native rajah.

But of course Frank Reade and his friends were ignorant of all these proceedings on the part of the rajah, which were intended to occasion them future trouble, and at the present they thought only of extricating themselves from the immediate peril of capture.

The bold front presented by Frank, Barney and Pomp on the ground beside the coach, while Dr. Vaneyke and Moreland covered the crowd with their rifles from the top of the vehicle, for a moment caused the native guards to hesitate about rushing upon the Electric Team.

Barney was in his element at the prospect of a "ruction," and he shouted:

"Bad luck 'til yez! It's wan good Irish lad as could bate the heads av the whole gang! Faith an' if yez want an illigant bit av a shindy, sind out any four av yez yellor nagurs half way, an' it's Barney O'Shea will mate the same wid a sprig av a shillalah, and bate the devil's tattoo on their skulls, an' it's a foine toime yez can have over the wake."

But although the reckless belligerent Irishman was in dead earnest, and Pomp looked as if he meant to back him up if his challenge was accepted, the natives paid no heed to his remarks, and the leader of the guards—a very giant in form—strode forth from the ranks of his followers a few paces, and shouted in very good English:

"Surrender, sahib, or my men will slay you all! It is the order of the rajah that you be arrested and conveyed to the royal palace to receive judgment."

The chief of the guards brandished his sword as he spoke, and it was evident that he sought to intimidate the young American.

But Frank did not scare. He had been thinking intently for a moment, striving to devise some expedient which might avail to turn the tables on the enemy.

In a low voice he now said to Dr. Vaneyke:

"Doctor, just turn the team about and be ready to send the horse charging into the native crowd at full speed when I give the word."

"All right, Frank, but take care what you are about to do. We do not wish to make this affair any more serious than we can avoid, I should suppose," replied the good doctor.

"Certainly not. I'm only going to try the virtue of electricity. I think electrical treatment will do that big, self-important Sepoy good," replied Frank.

The old doctor quickly shut off the electric current on one side of the team, turned on a full head on the other side and slowly turned the team—the axles working smoothly on their central pivots, so that the turning was accomplished with great ease.

The metal team now faced the natives, and, depressing the lever controlling the electric light, the doctor caused a brilliant light to suddenly flash forth from the great globe under the driver's seat, like a flash of vivid lightning.

For an instant the glaring light blinded the eyes of the guards, and as they fell back a few paces involuntarily, Frank said to the chief of guards:

"We have no guarantee that you will keep faith with us. Once we surrender, your guards may fall upon and massacre us."

"Not so. I pledge you, in the name of the royal sahib, that you shall be treated as honorable captives, and conducted forthwith to the rajah," the chief of the guards hastened to say.

"Very well, but in my country, under such circumstances as the present, the contracting parties invariably shake hands to bind themselves to the fulfillment of the stipulated terms," said Frank.

"I will give the European my hand. Let them meet me half way," said the Sepoy, readily, and he strutted forward.

"All right," said Frank, advancing to meet him.

"Worra! Did I ever live to see Masther Frank surrender to a party of dirty yaller nagurs? Let some wan cover Barney O'Shea wid sackcloth an' ashes. Sthay, Master Frank, let me meet the nagur an' crack his cocoanut, jist be the ways av a joke to make things more bindin' forninst us," wailed Barney.

"You foolish fellow. Don't you see I have on my electric gloves?" said Frank.

"Be dad, so yez have."

"And they are connected by means of wires with a small but powerful electric battery, strapped between my shoulders."

"An' that's what makes yer hump? Begob, I thought it was grub yez was carrying in a knapsack."

"When I shake hands with Mr. East Indian you will see a surprised Sepoy, Barney. I'll make him move lively for once in his life at least. He'll dance a hornpipe."

"Make it an' Irish jig. An' Irish jig if yez love me, Masther Frank."

The next moment Frank and the huge Sepoy met at a point midway between the Electric Team and the crowd of natives.

Frank extended his right hand and grasped the hand of the swarthy native with his electric glove.

"Who, ah! Who! Who!" yelled the Sepoy, as the electric shock went through his frame. But he couldn't let go, and he began to dance about like a jumping-jack, yelling and threatening in a mixture of English and Hindoo that was scarcely intelligible.

"Whoop! Let the band play! Go in, old yaller an' hoe down yer feet. Yah, dat's a Souf Carolina break-down, shuah!" cried Pomp, in delight.

"You're a loiar!" cried Barney. "It's an' Irish jig."

The natives looked on in wonder and awe, not unmixed with terror, as they saw the chief of the guard, who was a notably proud and dignified fellow, dancing away like mad.

Finding that he could not let go of Frank's hand, the Sepoy ceased to threaten, and his manner was quite meek, as he implored:

"Let me go, good sahib. Let me go. You are a great juggler, and I can do nothing in your grasp."

"I'll let you go if you will first order your men back to the city," said Frank, who had a well defined purpose in his present little electric experiment.

"No. It cannot be. The rajah would order me beheaded," said the Sepoy.

"Then I'll have to make you dance a little faster, my nimble-footed friend," said Frank, facetiously.

As he spoke he, with his left hand, connected a second wire to his right electric glove, and sent an additional supply to it from the battery.

The augmented electric current made the Sepoy leap clear off the ground.

"Now will yez contradict an Irish gentleman, ye naygur? Sure and any one can see the yellor blood is dancin' av an Irish reel," said Barney to Pomp.

"No, sah; dat man am dancin' an' old Virginia break-down. Dat's what's de matter," affirmed Pomp.

"Bedad, I'll take the lie from no mon, laste av all from a nagur! Square yerself before I wipe up the ground wid yez," cried Barney.

"Silence!" thundered Frank.

Pomp and Barney were squealed.

"Now," said Frank to the Sepoy, "I want you to be quick and order your men off. Tell them we are coming to the city with you to surrender. That I've so agreed. You understand?"

"Yes, sahib. But—"

"Do as I say, or on goes more electricity and you'll dance your legs off."

"Yes, sahib," said the Sepoy, desperately.

Frank Reade and electricity had conquered at last, and the Sepoy was ready to obey.

He turned to his men and shouted:

"Return to the city. The Europeans agree to follow with me."

The guards hesitated, thinking perhaps that this was not a voluntary command.

But the Sepoy reiterated the order under the impulse of his pain and terror.

"Go, I say?" he thundered.

He was a leader whom his men knew by past experience was not to be disobeyed with impunity, and so they filed away.

As soon as the opening to the next street leading to the country beyond and skirting along the open trench for a short distance was cleared by the guard, Frank let the Sepoy go by disconnecting his electric glove with the battery.

Then he rushed to the coach and sprang aboard.

Pomp and Barney followed.

The team was at once put in motion along the road which the dispersal of the guard had opened, and the electric conveyance bowled swiftly away.

The end of the open trench was soon reached, and then the inventor's wonderful vehicle proceeded on the route to the north.

But all at once a score of elephants, ridden by dusky riders, fled out into the road before the team.

It was a strange, weird scene which was sud-

denly formed there on the wild jungle-road by the advent of the elephants and their swarthy riders, who had abruptly urged their great animals out of the thicket beside the highway.

Under the white brilliancy of the mystic electric illumination, the great East Indian elephants assumed grotesque and strange proportions, and the almost naked jungle-men, who were perched upon their backs, seemed like uncouth gnomes of the forest; their white turbans contrasted strangely with their copperish brown bodies that shone with oil, and the curved swords flashed and scintillated as the light was reflected from their polished steel blades.

The shadowy arms of giant jungle trees framed the picture above, and the gloom of night shut in the wild scene, making the perspective a black void beyond the sphere of the weird ghostly light.

The ivory tusks of the elephants tipped with burnished brass, flashed here and there like stars set in the heads of the great black beasts, and their barbaric trappings were studded and emblazoned with tinsel and glittering cloth.

The jungle on either side of the highway was most impenetrable, and the Electric Team could not enter its entangled growth, and so pass the barrier of elephants. A determined charge at full speed seemed possible, but the adoption of such a course could but be attended with a danger which Frank Reade ever sought to avoid.

In such a procedure there must ensue a collision at once terrific and disastrous. The Electric Team could scarcely be expected to withstand such forcible contact without sustaining damage. The injury might easily prove so destructive as to render the machinery useless, and thus prevent the escape of the American party.

Frank Reade at first considered the idea of a charge, but he dismissed the project as one fraught with too great danger to his wonderful invention.

But retreat was not to be thought of, as undoubtedly the Rajah's emissaries were already on the trail of the Electric Team in overpowering numbers.

The indication was that the inventor's party would be compelled to engage in a desperate encounter with the elephant riders if the latter, as their attitude implied, were bent upon contesting the further advance of the Americans.

Frank saw that the elephant-riders did not wear the costume of the rajah's troops, and almost at once he noted that they resembled in every respect the dreaded Phansigars or Strangers, whom he had previously encountered.

And further, before a word was spoken by any of the elephant-riders, the young inventor recognized the fierce, evil features of one of their number.

Beyond any question, the man whose features struck Frank as being singularly familiar was the same murderous-looking stranger who had come to the electric conveyance stealthily at dead of night and recognized Mohammed.

In a whisper Frank communicated his startling and suggestive discovery to his comrades.

Mohammed was still concealed in the interior of the wonderful coach, but a low, startled exclamation which escaped his lips as Frank spoke, informed the young American and his friends that the mysterious East Indian had heard his remarks and was alarmed.

"The scoundrels mean mischief," said Dr. Vaneyke.

"Yes," continued the spokesman of the Phansigars. "We know that Mohammed is with you. In my hand I hold the rajah's order for his arrest and also for the arrest of your entire party. But I will allow you to proceed unmolested if you give Mohammed up to us."

"Never!" exclaimed Moreland. "What! Surrender the brave, devoted fellow, who saved my life, to these blood-thirsty wretches, whose trade is murder! I'll die before such a craven deed is done!"

"Well said! Have no fear. We are Americans, and we are not likely to be guilty of an act of cowardice or ingratitude," said Frank Reade, earnestly.

Then to the Phansigar:

"What has the man you seek done? Do you accuse him of any crime?"

"Yes. He is the trusted friend and co-plotter with Wolandah, who seeks to overthrow the present dynasty of the province of Jagpore. Mohammed, and the would-be usurper, Wolandah, are both outlawed. There is a price upon the head of each. They are guilty of high treason!" said the Phansigar.

Frank was about to speak again, when suddenly the door in the top of the coach opened, and Mohammed himself bounded into view.

"Ha! said I not so. It is he! Mohammed, the traitor!" exclaimed the chief stranger, and his men uttered fierce expressions of satisfaction.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ELEPHANT RIDERS.

It was a strange, weird scene which was sud-

"Tippoo Kahn, thou liest! I am no traitor, but I seek to establish justice. Wolandah is the real heir to the throne of Jagpore. We have the proof. The murderous plot of the false rajah has been revealed to us, and I stand as a champion of justice and right and I defy you and all your secret assassins!"

Mohammed seemed transformed. He grew in height it appeared, his eyes flashed, and his fine intelligent brown face was all alight with the fire of a noble resolution.

He waved his hand at the strangler in a disdainful gesture of defiance, and a sudden outcry of rage from his enemies burst forth.

"No doubt of that. And now that the Electric Team is at a standstill, the Phansigars will probably not long delay about inaugurating hostilities," replied Frank.

"An' it's a ruction that I smell, begob!" said Barney. He had his shillalah in his hand, and he whispered to Pomp:

"Be the harp av Tara, me black diamond, O'll have one good whack at the divils, barrin' no accident, do yez moind. Whist, me ebony Adonis! Say not a worrd to Mather Frank, but look out till yez see something drop forninst me sprig av a stick."

In the shadows, back of the front seat on the top of the coach, where Frank Reade and all the party were now assembled save only Mohammed, Barney crept away entirely unobserved by any one except Pomp.

"Gollie! I 'spec dat Irishman am a gwine fo' to done some foolishness, suah!" muttered Pomp, as Barney stole to the rear of the vehicle.

But Pomp and Barney always stood by each other, and the ducky did not voice his convictions to the other members of the party.

In reality, but a moment passed after the Electric Team halted when the Phansigar, whom Frank had recognized, spoke.

In an incisive voice, whose shrill intonations were peculiar to the tones of the jungle-men, the fellow said, drawing a soiled parchment from his girdle:

"Europeans. In the name of Kodah the Rajah of Jagpore, I command you to surrender the outlaw Mohammed whom you have concealed in your strange palanquin."

"Whyfore?" replied Frank. "Whyfore do you demand the surrender of the man you name, and are you not deceived as to the presence of such a person with us?"

"No, the spies of the order of Kalee are everywhere, in the jungle in the bungalow, the palace, the hovel. The city shelters them, and the forest gives them protection, and the men of Kalee saw the outlawed Mohammed concealed in your palanquin while you were in Jagpore," replied the strangler.

"Kalee is the name of the deity worshiped by the East Indian cast of strangler," said Dr. Vaneyke. "Silence!" cried Mohammed. "Silence, wolves of the jungle, and hear a man speak! I have more to say. You shall hear me!"

Mohammed stamped his foot and his tone was imperious, as his voice rose higher in the effort to make himself heard above the din of his foes' enraged outcries.

"Let us hear what the outlaw would say!" said Tippoo Kahn.

The voices of his followers fell, and as soon as silence ensued, Wolandah's champion resumed:

"Well I know the real motive which actuates you, Tippoo Kahn, in serving the rajah to the end of hunting me down. You are determined to wrest from me 'the secret of the Parsees' hidden gold. You covet the untold millions to which Wolandah and myself are the only living rightful heirs."

"You lie! You lie, you traitor!" hissed the Strangler, but his face took on a startled look that told full well that his denial was a falsehood.

"No, I speak only the truth. Your emissaries hunted me out of India and I fled to Afghanistan, and the slave-dealers caught me and sold me into servitude more terrible than death. But I escaped and saved my secret—the great gold secret of the Parsees—from you."

"I deny all!"

"It is your trade to lie—to lie and kill!"

"Bah! The end of this talk has come. I hold the rajah's order. You must surrender!" cried Tippoo Kahn.

"It shall be as my European friends say. I would not bring trouble upon them. Masters, what is your will? Shall I go with the assassins?" said Mohammed.

He turned his splendid intelligent eyes full upon the group of Americans as he spoke, and they all saw that the noble, devoted fellow was entirely sincere in thus making them the arbiters of his fate.

"We have already decided!" cried Frank Reade.

"We have given the scoundrel his answer," said Moreland.

"And what is it, sahib? Let me hear your words again," petitioned Mohammed, and he bowed his graceful form in a profound salaam.

"We say that you shall not surrender!" shouted Frank.

"Never! Never!" cried Moreland, and Dr. Vaneyke, while Pomp, catching the enthusiasm which was really infectious, caught up an American flag which lay on the top of the coach, and flaunting the stars and stripes in the faces of the East Indians, he cried:

"Dat's what's de matter, niggers! Surrender nuffin! Dat ain't de style ob de game roosters under dis yere good ole flag! Hurrah fer de stars an' stripes, an' de fifteenth amendment! Hi! yi!"

"Ireland forever and Erin go braugh!" shouted Barney's voice, and all were too much excited by the thrilling circumstance to notice that the Irishman's pleasant, brogue-laden voice seemed to emanate from above their heads.

The elephant riders consulted for a moment among themselves, and Frank Reade called out in commanding tones:

"Come, get out of the road, and let us pass. We do not propose to be longer delayed by a band of naked scalawags!"

"You shall not pass! We are determined to secure the traitor Mohammed. We have decided to give you until I count ten to surrender him," said Tippoo Kahn.

"And then what?" asked Frank, sneeringly.

"If you do not surrender the outlaw we will capture you all."

"We will have a little something to say about that," retorted Frank, sneeringly.

"Yes, sah. Fo' de Lawd, yes!" gritted the black dead shot, fingering his rifle nervously.

"One—two—three," thus Tippoo Kahn began to count.

## CHAPTER IX.

### BARNEY'S BLOW.

"COUNT away dar, ole hoss-fly. But hole on fer 'bout a half a minit. I bet yah a chaw of 'bacca yer don't count ten," cried Pomp, interrupting the Strangler chief.

"What! Do you mean to shoot him, Pomp? No, no! You must not do that. I wish to avoid all bloodshed if possible," Frank Reade hastened to say.

"Dat's all right, Mars Frank."

"Then you won't shoot?"

"No, sah."

"What did you mean, then?"

"I was jiss gwine ter bluff de nigger, dat's all."

"Nonsense! But if we are compelled to defend ourselves, much as I dislike the idea of killing any of these wretches, I think we are justified in doing anything to protect our own lives," said Frank.

"Yes," assented Moreland, sternly.

"This is a case of self-defense alone," uttered the doctor.

"The stranglers are dogs, and they deserve the fate of dogs," Mohammed said, striding to Frank Reade's side.

In one hand he grasped a heavy East Indian sword with a curved blade, and in the other he clutched a repeating derringer, which was a present he had received from Tom Moreland before the party sailed from New York.

The expression upon Mohammed's usually serene and peaceful countenance indicated that all the warlike passions of his nature were deeply stirred, and that in the event of a combat he would be foremost in the fray.

But scarcely heeding the interruption, the strangler continued his count.

"Four, five, six."

Thus he went on, and Frank Reade whispered to his comrades in a voice so low and cautious that it was impossible that he could be overheard by the enemy.

"Let all have their weapons ready to use when the scoundrel counts ten. I anticipate that then the enemy will make a charge. We all have our chain armor on yet, and we need not fear bullets, I think."

"Seven, eight," continued Tippoo Kahn, while Frank and his comrades looked to their weapons, and one and all satisfied themselves that they were all in perfect order and ready for immediate use.

"Nine!" cried Tippoo Kahn, and the next number was about to be uttered by the murderous jungle dweller, when suddenly a dark object was lowered from the limb of a tree that projected out over the rascal's head, and swung in the air.

It was Barney's shillalah.

There was a dull thud as the daring Irishman dealt the strangler chief a stunning blow on the skull, and the jungle-man tumbled from the back

of his elephant and struck heavily on the ground, where he lay motionless.

"Whoop! take that, yez murderin' blackguard. Faith an' it was a nate bit av a tap, an' Barney O'Shea's the lad to twirl the stick for—"

Barney's exultant end characteristic utterance was abruptly cut short.

He lost his balance and fell from the limb of the tree to which he had climbed, unsuspected by any one except Pomp.

But Barney struck on the back of the elephant, and came up on his feet all right with his beloved shillalah yet clutched in his hand.

Despite the peril of the moment Frank Reade and his comrades laughed outright. The achievement of the reckless Irishman was so absurd, and yet so daring and such a complete surprise that the inventor's party were startled into merriment.

And Pomp was simply tickled almost to death.

"Gollie! Ki, yah! He done do it, suah! You is de boss, Barney! You is de king pin an' doan' nobody say no! Gollie, to see dat yaller nigger jus' tumble! Yah! Yah! You done hit him right whar he reside!" cried Pomp, and he executed a double shuffle, and he kicked out so hard that one of his loose brogans flew off his foot and struck an ugly-faced stranger full in the mouth.

Then there was another shout of laughter from the American party, and Pomp shouted.

"Gollie! I done frow myself at dem fellers yit! But I'se sorry I lost dat shoe, 'cause dat's de one I carry me razor in; an' what am a colored gemman widout a razor in his shoe?"

But the stranglers were now thoroughly infuriated at the turn affairs had taken.

The fall of their chief seemed to impel them to seek to take vengeance.

They surged about Barney, who stood on the elephant's back brandishing his shillalah and breathing defiance as bravely as Horatius, the noble Roman, only Barney did not look much like the classic hero, and the jungle road did not resemble

"The bridge that spanned old Tiber with its gleaming yellow sands."

The elephant-riders uttered mad, menacing cries, and urging their unwieldy animals all about the great elephant upon which the Irishman stood, they slashed at the intrepid fellow most savagely. A circle of the East Indians' short, gleaming, curved swords encompassed the heroic Barney.

But he lay about him lustily with his stick. It was a picnic for Barney. He was in his element, and he would not have enjoyed a real Donnybrook row better.

It was Barney's policy to hit a head wherever he saw it. Nimble avoiding the swords of the enemy, Barney dealt blow after blow.

But closer and closer pressed the foe.

The stranglers concentrated in the effort to slay the Irishman.

And at last Barney yelled:

"Bedad, it's a great ruction I've had! A shindy to be proud of, but it's gettin' hot, and I'd rather have the solid ground than the deck av any elephant whin it comes to an out an' out bit av a shindy."

So saying, Barney dropped to the ground.

His friends on the electric carriage had not fired a shot, because had they done so, they might have hit Barney.

As Barney struck the ground, he made a run for the electric coach. At the same time Frank Reade, who had elevated the small cannon over the rear seat by means of the mechanical contrivance under the carriage, which worked on a pivot, suddenly discharged the cannon.

"Boom!" came the thundering detonation of the cannon, and the elephants were terrified. Frank had purposely fired over the stranglers' heads. He sought to frighten them off if he could, without killing any of them.

The elephants reared and plunged, and all was confusion among the stranglers.

While the enemy strove to urge their frightened elephants to charge the Electric Team, the huge animals were further terrified.

Dr. Vaneyke and Moreland acting upon Frank Reade's instructions had produced a number of fire-balls, which were in the locker among the supplies.

While yet the detonation of the discharged cannon reverberated through the jungle, the Americans hurled the fire-balls among the elephants.

The great beast uttered shrill trumpeting screams, and rushed against each other in their terror, lashing out with their great trunks in a furious way.

A few of the stranglers threw themselves off their elephants, and leaped up and caught the metal rod which ran around the body of the electric coach, as that band of metal was the only thing that afforded them a hold.

Frank was on the alert, and no sooner had the

stranglers attempted to board the coach than he turned on the electricity, and sent a strong current through the rod they had grasped.

The jugglers received a terrible shock, and they went tumbling away from the coach fully convinced that the Europeans were jugglers of supernatural power.

The elephants were now thoroughly unmanageable. The Strangers could no longer control them, even partially.

But a misfortune much to be deplored had befallen Barney. The elephants dashed for the jungle as Frank shocked the Phansigars, and one of the enraged animals caught the Irishman up in his trunk as easily as though he had been an infant and carried him away.

"Worra! Take him off! Be dad, Oi didn't con-thract for to fight the elephants! Worra! Help! Help!" yelled poor Barney, as the great elephant disappeared in the jungle with him.

"Gollie, Is'e a-gwine to help Barney," cried Pomp. The Strangers were carried away by the elephants, and as Pomp spoke he made a leap from the electric coach.

"I'll go with you," cried Frank.

In a moment he was beside Pomp, and he shouted to his friends:

"Let the rest of you remain to guard the coach," and the succeeding instant he vanished with Pomp in the dense jungle, where the elephant that carried Barney had gone. A few moments later Frank became separated from Pomp. Then he came to an open space where the moonlight fell brilliantly, and silently as shadows out of the cover stole six of the half-naked Strangers.

Frank sprang to one side and placed his back against a great tree preparatory to engaging in a desperate fight for life.

He did not attempt flight, for he knew it would be useless.

The Phansigars rushed at the young inventor; but all at once there was a crash in the undergrowth, and out into the "open," between Frank Reade and his enemies, sprang a magnificent full-grown tiger.

At the same moment Frank heard the electric bell sounding a thrilling alarm.

A wild, despairing cry fell from Frank's lips as he faced the double danger—the tiger and the Strangers.

## CHAPTER X.

### WOLANDAH AND HIS TIGER.

FRANK READE was really in the wildest and most dangerous of the East Indian jungles, as any native could have told him, for there the tigers lurked, constantly on the watch for their prey.

All around the open space in which the young inventor was confronted by the six Phansigars, and the scarcely more dreaded tiger, the cover was most impenetrable.

The thickly-branched trees were full of monkeys and parrots chattering to each other, but at the appearance of the great tiger the concert in the tree-tops ceased instantly.

The frightened monkeys scampered away, and the parrots followed them on swift wing. The strong musky smell of the tiger pervaded the air, and carried a warning of his proximity to some distance.

The tiger was a magnificent creature, standing as high as a small cow, and he made a fine picture in the midst of the jungle landscape.

The splendid animal's bright golden hide was striped with the most intense velvety-black, every muscle in his massive, yet wonderfully graceful form, stood out plainly, and each movement was cat-like and stealthy.

For a moment after the sudden advent of the tiger into the natural arena of the jungle the Phansigars seemed paralyzed with alarm, and all at once they understood that the dreaded jungle terror was between them and the European whom they meant to attack. They knew, too, of course, that they were in as great danger from the savage beast as was the white man, who stood by with his back against the great tree.

The natives of all parts of India fear the tiger more than any other animal, and the jungle-men almost immediately wheeled about and sprang away into the dense cover, glad to escape the tiger, even though the European eluded them.

But they did not think that he would escape the savage monster that confronted him, and perhaps they exulted in the thought that the young American would fall a victim to the tiger.

The electric bell on the inventor's wonderful coach had ceased to peal forth its alarming strokes, and the sounds made by the elephants as they crashed their way through the jungle in their wild flight were no longer heard, and silence dread and appalling settled upon the scene.

Frank Reade believed that no assistance was near, and that single-handed and alone he must

fight for his life against the most powerful and ferocious of all East Indian animals.

The intrepid young American, although he had faced deadly perils in almost all parts of the world during his several great journeys with his remarkable inventions, had never found himself in a situation of more imminent peril than now.

But he resolved to make a desperate battle for his life. His dauntless spirit and iron nerves sustained him, and keeping his eyes fixed upon the yellow orbs of the tiger, he quickly presented his rifle and took aim at the creature.

But the tiger did not leap at him. On the contrary, it remained crouching, for all the world like a well trained pointer "holding" game for the arrival of his master, and presently the glowing yellow orbs seemed to lose their fierce light.

Then the tiger yawned, and stretched his great limbs lazily. Frank was surprised, but through the sights of his rifle he had now covered one of the animal's eyes, and he was about to discharge what he hoped would prove a fatal shot, when suddenly he made a discovery which caused him to withhold his fire, and which occasioned him the greatest surprise.

Upon the neck of the tiger he now saw a great spiked collar.

The sight of the collar suggested to Frank's mind the idea that the animal had been in captivity, and at once his thoughts reverted to the reflection that he had heard these savage beasts were often tamed, and kept as pets by native animal-tamers and jugglers, who gained a livelihood by exhibiting them.

Frank also thought then that it was not impossible that the tiger which crouched before him was one of those tame tigers of which he had heard.

This thought was a most welcome one, for naturally enough, he considered that if the tiger was not a wild one—and his hesitation about attacking made the idea seem more probable—then the master of the creature might be near.

An occurrence which quickly succeeded these reflections, which Frank made instantly, was confirmatory of them.

He caught the sound of approaching footsteps, and presently a man strode out of the jungle into the "open."

He was a splendid-looking fellow, and at one glance Frank Reade recognized him as "Wolandah the tiger king," and the hero of the wild-beast show at Jagpore.

Frank pronounced Wolandah's name, and he cried:

"You have come just in time!"

"Ah! 'Tis the brave European. Down, Saba! Come here, good Saba! Come, come, I say!" replied Wolandah, addressing the tiger last.

The animal arose and went to his master's side like a well trained dog, and licked his hand. Wolandah patted the creature's head, and he purred like a cat when stroked.

Frank was surprised.

"Then the tiger is yours, and tame?" he said.

"Yes, Saba is my pet. I caught him when he was but a kitten, and he has never left me. He is docile and obedient. But like a dog, he will fly at my enemies at my command."

"Well, the tiger's coming saved me from the Strangers, and I am grateful to you, Wolandah."

"Speak not of gratitude, sahib. 'Tis Wolandah who is indebted to you. The false Rajah of Jagpore would have caused my death but for you. I left you suddenly that I might serve you. A spy informed me that Tippoo Kahn, the Phansigar, had been sent by the rajah to head you off, and with my tiger, I took to the jungle, hoping to save you. But an unexpected delay detained me, and I fear that your wonderful vehicle has already been attacked."

"Yes, but we repulsed the enemy, and I followed them into the jungle in pursuit of one of their elephants which carried off one of my party."

"And here you were surprised by the Phansigars, whom I saw running through the jungle as I came up?"

"Precisely so, and I fear that poor Barney O'Shea, my faithful servant, is lost."

"Say not so. I know the haunts of the jungle-men. I think Tippoo Kahn will take your man to the temple of Kalee, of which old Madra, the juggler and master of a famous company of Nautch girls, is the keeper."

"Then I must ask you to help me save Barney."

"I will do so."

"But first I must return to my Electric Team, which I left in the jungle road where we encountered Tippoo Kahn's men. A moment ago the bell of the electric carriage rang an alarm, and I would learn what the signal means."

"I will accompany you," replied Wolandah.

Frank then led the way in the direction of the road, and as he and Wolandah went along they conversed further, while Saba, the tiger, trotted at his master's side.

"How you can have so completely tamed your

tiger is to me a matter of great wonderment," said Frank.

Then Wolandah explained.

He stated that the means by which tigers are retained in perfect docility in some parts of India is very simple, and not practiced by wild-beast tamers of civilized countries.

"You see, sahib, we bring up the creature from a cub on boiled rice and buffalo butter, with a little boiled meat, never allowing it to taste raw flesh. Many of our fakirs keep tame tigers, who follow them everywhere, and they are never either chained or caged."

"And you spoke of the Nautch girls. I am curious regarding them. They are wonderful dancers I believe, and famous for their beauty and grace?" said Frank.

"Yes, the Bayaderes or Nautch girls are all that, most lovely creatures, and they are a regular caste divided into parties of a dozen or more, who are under a master who makes all contracts for them like the leader of a band."

"I think I have heard that in some instances the nautch girls are slaves to all intents—at the mercy of the masters, who may be likened to Italian padrones."

"That is but too true, and old Madra of the Kalee temple, of whom I spoke, is one of the cruel masters such as you mean. His beautiful nautch girls are but slaves, and the old rascal treats them as such."

"It is a shameful state of affairs."

"Yes, but many of the companies of dancing-girls are all their own masters—as much, I mean, as a company of actors would be in your country, Sahib."

"And why are Madra's nautch girls kept at the temple of Kalee?" asked Frank, thinking a place of worship a singular place for an engagement of public dancers, who would only appear in a theater in America.

"You must know, sahib, that there are two separate classes of nautch girls—the 'Temple Bayaderes,' who are attached to the temples, and execute the sacred dances as an act of religion, and the public dancers, who travel or remain in the cities where they have a reputation. The most renowned ones are entirely free."

## CHAPTER XI.

### A SURPRISING AMBUSH.

As Wolandah last spoke he and Frank Reade emerged out of the jungle into the road in which the young American inventor had left the Electric Team.

And there, under the moonlight, stood the remarkable conveyance drawn by the metallic steeds whose wondrous mechanism was the last great triumph of the youthful inventor's surpassing genius.

But the electric light was extinguished. Not a single ray emanated from the great globe whose brilliant illumination Frank had expected to welcome him.

Only the pale moon shed its weird light upon the jungle road, only the nocturnal luminary disclosed to Frank and his native comrade the vehicle in which he hoped to penetrate to the heart of Central Asia, and solve the mystery which surrounded the fate of the missing explorer.

And, moreover, all was silence, profound and oppressive on that lonely highway.

Not a sound came from the electric coach, not one of Frank's party was to be seen. The young inventor experienced a premonitory dread which he could not explain.

And he was completely astounded. It seemed that all the explorer's party had deserted the wonderful invention, and left it standing there alone with no one to guard it, completely at the mercy of any chance discoverer.

Involuntarily Frank halted upon the road-side, and his surprise for the moment dominated every other thought in his mind.

What did it mean? Was it possible that his party had fled? Had they been attacked during his absence and carried away into captivity?

These questions presented themselves swiftly for Frank's consideration. But he thought neither explained the mystery.

If his friends had been captured the enemy would undoubtedly have destroyed the Electric Team, or compelled the explorers to run it where they willed.

Thus Frank reasoned.

But only for a moment. Then he advanced toward the coach, accompanied by Wolandah and his tiger.

Still the profound silence remained unbroken, save for the occasional cry of a jackal in the distance.

Frank reached the coach, and Wolandah was but a few paces behind him, when suddenly the door of the vehicle was dashed open.

Frank Reade sprang back with a startled cry, for at that instant he was confronted with one of the greatest surprises he had ever experienced in all his life.

As the door of the coach opened, half a dozen naked jungle-men armed with short curved swords leaped out.

Instantly Frank understood that his enemies had made the electric coach serve them as a place of concealment in which to lay in wait for him.

The ambush was well planned, and its inception must have been the work of a cunning mind. The Phansigars expected, no doubt, that Frank Reade and Pomp would return to the Electric Team without Barney, and certainly they could not have anticipated the arrival of Wolandah the tiger king.

The sight of the hero of the jungles seemed to disconcert the swarthy jungle-men for an instant, and Frank and Wolandah bounded backward, while the East Indian grasped his tame tiger by the collar and uttered some command to the animal in his native language.

The succeeding moment the Phansigars made a rush at Frank Reade and Wolandah, while the tiger, which the jungle-men had not discovered, crouched close to the ground behind his master and the young American.

Frank and Wolandah stood shoulder to shoulder, and the former leveled his rifle at the onrushing Phansigars, while the East Indian brandished his sword.

Frank's rifle cracked sharply, and one of the jungle-men fell. But the others kept on. They seemed confident of overpowering the two brave men before them by force of numbers.

Fierce cries fell from their lips, their swarthy faces looked hideous under the moonlight, and their eyes flashed and scintillated with savage fury.

But the Phansigars counted without their host. True it was they had completely surprised Frank Reade and his East Indian friend, but they in turn were about to be surprised.

As the jungle-men made their fierce charge, Frank Reade caught sight of a dark form crawling out of the thicket, and making its way stealthily toward the electric coach.

The man lifted his head, and Frank saw the features of Mohammed.

Just then, when the jungle-men were close upon Frank and Wolandah, and when it seemed that a terrible hand to hand conflict was to ensue, Wolandah suddenly sprang aside and revealed his tiger to the startled sight of the Phansigars.

Then Wolandah uttered a peculiar shrill cry, and at the signal, which the tame tiger had been thoroughly trained to obey, he made a terrific leap.

Straight at the jungle-men the great tiger leaped. His splendid form quivered for a moment in the air, and then he descended right among the Phansigars, while he uttered a roar that carried terror to the hearts of the Strangers.

The affrighted jungle-men fled pell-mell into the jungle, and the tiger pursued them. While the enemy was in full flight the electric light suddenly flashed out from the great globe on the coach again, and then the small cannon was quickly discharged, and a shower of grape-shot was sent hurtling over the heads of the dusky marauders.

Mohammed had gained the electric conveyance, and as Frank had taken occasion to previously instruct him in the management of the electricity, the East Indian had without difficulty turned on the light and discharged the cannon at the fleeing enemy.

The tiger pursued the Phansigars until Wolandah drew a silver whistle from his girdle, and blew a shrill blast upon it. Then the tiger came bounding back to his master.

The young American inventor meanwhile reached the coach, and ascended to the roof where Mohammed was.

Frank was consumed by solicitude for his comrades, and his first words to Mohammed were:

"Where are the others?"

"In the jungle," replied the East Indian.

"Explain. Tell me, Mohammed, what occurred during my absence with Pomp in pursuit of Barney?" said Frank.

"The jungle-men crept upon us like serpents. The door of the coach was open, and we were on the roof. The Strangers gained the interior of the coach, and when presently the doctor and my master Sahib Moreland, went down inside, the enemy seized them. Then I took the alarm, and sounded the alarm with the bell, and leaping from the coach I ran for my life. The jungle-men pursued me, but I gained the cover and eluded them."

"But the wretches have not slain my friends. Do not tell me that?" cried Frank as Mohammed passed.

"No. After eluding the Phansigars I crept back and saw the rascals carry the doctor and my master, who were both securely bound and gagged, into the thicket. Then the Strangers went back and concealed themselves in the coach. I was

about to set my master and the doctor free when I saw you coming, and I thought I could be of the most service by turning the cannon on the Phansigars."

"You have done well. Now we must at once release my comrades," replied Frank.

Then he and Mohammed descended to the ground. Mohammed greeted his compatriot, Wolandah, warmly, and the two exchanged some remarks in the Hindoo language as the former led Frank Reade to the jungle.

At a short distance in the tangled thicket Dr. Vaneyke and Tom Moreland were found, and in a moment they were freed from the cords and the gags with which they were secured.

A further explanation followed.

Then Wolandah said:

"If you would rescue your man who has been carried away by the elephant it must be done to-night. I am sure the poor fellow is now Tippoo Kahn's captive, and if he is not set free to-night on the morrow the Phansigar chief will take him to Jagpore, and once he is lodged in the rajah's dungeon we cannot save him."

"Pomp has not returned, but we will not delay to wait for his appearance. Two of our number must be left in charge of the Electric Team while the others proceed to attempt Barney's rescue," replied Frank Reade.

"Pardon me, sahib, I need but one man besides myself," said Wolandah.

"You had better take two," urged Frank.

"Then I will do so," assented Wolandah, and he added:

"I will choose Mohammed and his master."

Moreland and the East Indian assented, and led by Wolandah they set out for the stronghold of Tippoo Kahn.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BEAUTIFUL BAYADERE OR DANCING GIRL.

FRANK READE and Dr. Vaneyke remained in charge of the Electric Team, while Moreland and Mohammed went into the jungle guided by the East Indian tiger-tamer.

"How far have we to go before we arrive at the temple where you expect to find Tippoo Kahn and Barney?" asked Moreland of Wolandah, as they were advancing.

"In less than an hour if we go swiftly we shall be there," replied the East Indian.

"It is singular what a murderous superstition inspires the Phansigars," said Moreland, presently.

"Yes, murder is the religion of the fanatical Strangers. It is their belief that every human life they can sacrifice to their Goddess Kalee will please that deity, and so since the mutiny they have murdered travelers all over India although the British government have made every effort to stamp out this terrible curse of our land," replied Wolandah.

"How is it, Wolandah, that you and Mohammed express yourselves so well in English?" asked Moreland, who was surprised to hear the tiger king conversing like an educated European.

"Both Mohammed and myself were educated by the missionaries at Delhi," explained Wolandah.

Their rapid progress as the way became more difficult precluded further conversation just then, so the trio proceeded in silence, with Wolandah and his tiger in the lead.

Finally they arrived at a watercourse, which they forded easily, as it was by no means deep, and upon reaching the opposite bank the character of the jungle changed. The undergrowth was no longer dense and tangled, and the woods gradually became open, until it was an extensive grove of teak trees, towering high, with here and there a clump of bamboo.

"Now I must tell you my plans, for we shall presently come in sight of the temple, which is Tippoo Kahn's favorite retreat, and our further advance must be made with great caution," said Wolandah, halting in the teak grove.

"Since the Phansigars will be in force at the temple we can only succeed by resorting to a ruse, and first, while you conceal yourselves in yonder bamboo clump and there await my return, I will go forward, and try to find out positively if your comrade is a prisoner there, as I think."

Wolandah pointed at an adjacent thicket as he spoke, and the others were about to enter it when a yell was heard from behind a row of trees in the direction of the Phansigar's temple, and a voice shouted:

"Whoop! Bad luck til yez murderin' blackguards, sure an' it's me good sthick I have in me fist once again, an' Oi'll lay out some av yez yeller niggers before yez take it from me!"

The rich Irish brogue and unmistakable voice proclaimed that Barney O'Shea was the speaker, and that it must be the brave reckless fellow was about to engage in a "ruction" with his captors.

"That settles the question as to Barney's presence at the temple," said Moreland.

"Yes," assented Wolandah. "Come, let us advance cautiously, dodging from tree to tree."

In silence the two crept forward, and upon reaching the line of trees which shut out the view beyond, they discovered a strange-looking building at a short distance further on.

This was the Phansigars' temple, and it very much resembled the other temple of the same sect, where Barney and Pomp had encountered the Strangers, as previously recorded.

A yard surrounded by bamboo palings inclosed the jungle temple, and inside this yard the rescue party beheld Barney O'Shea.

The Irishman stood in one corner of the bamboo fence with coat and hat off, and as he danced about and flourished his shillalah he breathed defiance at a score of Phansigars who thronged in the temple yard, and who seemed bent upon securing the bold fellow.

Tippoo Kahn was urging his men on, shouting: "Are you all cowards? Seize the European dog, I say."

But Barney retorted:

"Bad luck ter yer eye, ye skinny ould scarecrow. Come on yerself, an', b'gob, it's Barney O'Shea as will tattoo the map av ould Ireland all over yez ugly mug wid the sprig av a sthick."

"There has been treachery here! The European was bound to a stake in the yard, and he could not have freed himself. The temple entrance and the gate of the yard were guarded. No one could pass the guard to free the European, yet his bonds were cut. Ha, I have it!" cried Tippoo Kahn.

As he spoke he sprang to a small door under the flight of steps which led to the main entrance of the temple, and pushed upon it. The door yielded.

"Ah, I thought so. Some one came through the door leading to the zenna or apartments of old Madra's Nauteh girls. Only the females are there. By my faith one of the temple dancing girls must have cut the cords that bound the European," continued Tippoo Kahn, as he discovered that the small door was not fastened.

Meanwhile, two of the Phansigars had been stealing toward Barney while those in front took his attention. The two who came along the fence back of Barney, carried the silken cords of the Strangers in their hands, and it was clear that they meant to throw them over his head and drag him down.

"Be the harp av Tara! Is there wan foighting mon in yez hull ugly crew? Shure-an' it's a chance for an illigant bit av a shindy I offer yez! Come on now! Don't let the foine chance for a ruction pass yez, or faith it's meself as will charge yez an' bate the hull gang!" continued Barney.

The Strangers were close at Barney's back, when suddenly a rifle exploded beside the fence, and one of the Strangers fell. Barney wheeled and dropped the other with a crack on his head from his shillalah.

"Goll! I'se heah! Ole Pomp am on han', you bet yer life, Barney! Gib dem yeller coons fits, an' I'se wid yer. Make a run fo' de gate, ehle!" cried an Ethiopian voice, and our friends, concealed by the trees, saw Pomp, who had discharged his gun just in time, leap toward the entrance of the inclosure. He had crept up unseen by the enemy.

"Whoop! Ireland forever! Black diamonds are trumps, begob, whin Pomp is around. Look out fer yez heads! Whoop!" Thus yelling, Barney charged for the gate, dealing blows right and left.

The Phansigars were astounded. Pomp's sudden shot had frightened them, for they naturally supposed he must have had a force at his back.

Barney so promptly took advantage of the circumstances, that he was at Pomp's side in a moment, and the two were in full flight, beyond the temple yard, before the natives realized it.

The Irishman and the darky reached the trees where their friends were concealed, and discovered them. Then their delight may be imagined. The Phansigars advanced in pursuit, but a volley of shots from the trees drove them back. Then our friends retreated.

In a few words Barney told that when the elephant that carried him away dropped him he was overpowered by the Phansigars and taken to the temple.

"But, bedad, the most beautiful colleen that ever I put me two eyes on, sneaked in through the little door under the stairs, and cut me loose from the shakle the blackguards tied me to, an' the colleen whispered: 'If yez get away, send some one to savea poor gurrul who is in despair.' 'I wul,' says I, an' begob, the colleen shall be saved if it's meself as docs it alone."

"We cannot make the attempt to-night. The temple will be doubly guarded now. But during to-morrow, when the vigilance of the guards is relaxed, we will try to rescue the dancing girl," said Wolandah.

"Yes," replied Moreland, "and I will help to do it."

Then the party beat a retreat in safety to the

Electric Team, and Pomp said he had lost his way, and accidentally found the temple.

When the inventor's party were reunited again Wolandah said that he must leave them, saying: "I am secretly organizing a revolt against the false Rajah of Jagpore, and I shall travel among the people at the north. We may meet again."

The noble fellow then shook hands with all, and after some conversation in the native tongue with Mohammed, he strode away, followed by his tiger, and Mohammed said Wolandah had told him of a secret entrance to the temple.

The Electric Team was run into a jungle thicket, and there concealed until the following day.

Then Mohammed, Moreland, and Barney started for the temple. The Irishman's description of the beautiful dancing-girl had fired Tom Moreland's imagination, and he was ready to take any risk to rescue her.

Mohammed led the party to a bank near the temple, which was on a hillside, and among the bushes that grew there he disclosed a tunnel-like entrance. Leaving Barney on guard at the entrance, Moreland and Mohammed stole along the tunnel until they came to a second door. There they listened, and they heard a musical voice, which emanated from beyond the door, chanting a strange melody. Suddenly the song ceased, and the same voice said:

"Oh, will the European whom I set free send me help?"

"Yes," whispered Moreland through the keyhole, and then he added an explanation.

The door was fastened on the inside, and the girl said she could not open it, so Moreland produced an implement which he had brought with him in view of such a circumstance as this, and he quickly broke the fastening. Then a young girl whose surprising beauty rendered him dumb in admiration came into the passage, and Moreland conducted her out to the light of day. Then he and his comrades set out for the Electric Team with the rescued maid. But in a moment an alarm sounded in the temple and they were pursued.

Fully a score of Phansigars were quickly bounding after the party, and Mohammed said:

"We must separate and thus confuse our pursuers, who will not know with which one the maid has gone."

The East Indian's advice was obeyed, and while Barney went in one direction Moreland and the girl ran on hand in hand, and the East Indian went crashing away in another course.

Barney and Mohammed reached the coach, but Moreland had not yet arrived. Frank Reade and all the others took their places on the top of the coach, and scarcely had they done so when a chorus of yells were heard in the jungle.

The coach was run out into the road, and in a few moments Moreland and the beautiful dancing girl sprang out of the cover hand in hand and rushed toward the coach, while close in pursuit came a score of the jungle-men. Frank Reade and his men aimed their rifles over the heads of the fugitives, meaning to check the pursuit of the enemy.

It was a moment of suspenseful excitement, and the hands of the swarthy natives were outstretched to drag the fugitives back into the jungle.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### RUNEE'S STORY—CARLYLE'S MEDAL.

MORELAND and the beautiful Nautch girl were in deadly peril, and for a moment the issue of the race for life in which they had engaged against the jungle-men was in doubt.

Tippoo Kahn and old Madra, the master of the Temple Bayaderes, were among the foremost of the pursuers of the beautiful fugitive and her companion.

The chief of the jungle-men and the old dancing-master strove to incite their men to put forth every effort to capture the European and the maid of the temple.

"Ah, you shall repay me all the rupees I gave according to our bargain, if I do not get the Nautch girl back again!" cried the chief of the Phansigars to old Madra.

The master of the dancing girls groaned, and he involuntarily clutched the silken purse concealed in his bosom where was bestowed the purchase money, or the bribe, he had received from Tippoo Kahn.

Old Madra worshiped the gods of the temple, but above them all he worshiped gold, and his avaricious nature took the alarm as he heard Tippoo Kahn's threat, for he saw that "Runee," the Nautch girl, was about to slip through his hands.

At this juncture, as the hands of the jungle-men who were foremost in the pursuit were outstretched to seize them, Moreland and his fair companion in peril made a quick forward bound.

At the same time Frank Reade and his com-

rades discharged a volley from the top of the coach.

The shots from the Europeans' weapons went hurtling through the ranks of the jungle-men, and their pursuing charge was immediately checked.

Naturally the Phansigars hastened to seek the cover of the jungle, and the young American inventor determined to give them a lesson and put them to further flight.

Barney and Pomp lent assistance and the cannon of the roof of the electric vehicle was quickly loaded with an electric bomb.

Then Frank trained the gun on the tangled jungle in which the Phansigars had sought concealment. A moment and the report of the cannon reverberated through jungle and plain, and the electric explosion fell in the tangled growth which sheltered the enemy.

Almost at once the explosion, upon which the young inventor had counted, ensued. Crash! Thus the report came, and the trees and shrubbery were rent and shattered in every direction for a considerable space.

The consternation and surprise of the natives exceeded the expectations of the inventor's party, and even Tippoo Kahn and old Madra took to their heels. These two were among those who were fortunate enough to escape.

"Begorra! Whin will the yaller nagurs learn that they cannot fool wid the loike av Masther Frank? Sure, an' it's a chance for a foine bit av a ruction ye have spoilt wid the bomb, but I'll forgive yez this toime," said Barney, as he witnessed the flight of the enemy.

"Gollie, dem fellers doan stop to say good-bye. I spec' da is gwine in on a long run. Ya! Da go like da was walkin' to' de cake!" remarked Pomp.

Meantime Tom Moreland and the lovely dancing girl had reached the electric coach, and the young American artist gallantly handed his companion into the coach.

The entire party welcomed Moreland and the maiden, and although Mohammed uttered few words, the expression upon his intelligent bronzed face told that he was delighted at his master's safe return.

The repulse of the enemy was complete, and the inventor's party was inclined to think that the Phansigars would be rather cautious about making another attack.

All congratulated the Nautch girl upon her escape, and there was not one among them who did not regard her with respectful admiration.

The girl of the temple was in form the ideal of shapeliness and grace, and there was not a more lovely face in all India, with its great black eyes soft and lustrous, luxurious dark hair twined with pearls, pouting red lips, curved in delicate beauty, and showing brilliant white teeth.

The dark, swarthy complexion of the Hindoo was wanting in the Nautch girl, and instead, her skin was pale olive, clear and transparent, and the contour of her features was not Asiatic. In fact, the Europeans decided that it must be that there was English blood in the maiden's veins, and that the ancestor, who was not of the race of India, had given the lovely girl most of the characteristics of Europeans.

The dancing girl blushed charmingly under the admiring glances of the Americans, and she said, in a sweet and musical voice, using perfect English:

"Honored sahibs or gentlemen, you have rescued Runee, the Nautch girl, from a fate which Madra, the temple-master, meant she should not escape. The rascally old master of the sacred dancers sold me to Tippoo Kahn for his wife, and on the morrow I was to have been delivered to the Phansigar chief."

"We are glad to have saved you," said Frank Reade, earnestly, and Moreland's eyes met the beautiful orbs which Runee turned upon him as she spoke with an expression so ardent that the maiden's glance fell, but not before she had given the young artist one sweet smile.

"And I fear very greatly that you have evoked great trouble for yourselves through your generous deed in my behalf. The stranger chief and old Madra will put forth every effort in their power to again drag me back to the hateful slavery which I have escaped," Runee continued.

"I will protect you. No harm shall come to you while I can lift my arm in your defense," said Moreland in sincere assurance.

"Faith, an' if it comes to fighting for the swate slip av a colleen, it's Barney O'Shea, the Cloney-kilty boy, as will be to the fore with his sprig av a sthick, an' devil take the heads that come forninst him," said the jolly Irishman.

"We can promise you protection, young lady," said Doctor Vaneyke, gravely. "But tell us, what authority has Madra, the master of the temple Nautch girls, over you, according to the rules of this country? and who are you? I do not think you

are a Hindoo. I should say you were a European, or, at least, one of your parents was."

An expression of sadness crossed the sweet, beautiful face of the Nautch girl, and looking up at the benevolent features of the old doctor, Runee replied pathetically:

"You have touched upon the mystery of my life when you ask who I am. Alas! I do not know. Save that I am called Runee, I am nameless, and my earliest recollection is only a vague memory which has caused me to believe that my mother was a beautiful European lady. But ever since I can remember I have been in the custody of the old master of the temple Bayaderes and his wife. By them I was taught to dance, and as they claim to have purchased me from my parents and they adopted me, in accordance with the native customs, they have the authority of parents over me."

"Ah," said the old doctor, musingly. "A romantic history. At the time of the Sepoy rebellion in India, when the natives arose against the Europeans, many an English gentleman's child was carried away into captivity. The probability is that such was your fate, my poor child."

"I have often thought so. But with the dream-like memory of my mother's face there comes before the mirror of my mind another profile. I recollect an aged Brahmin or priest with a long beard of snowy white, and deep, flashing dark eyes, and long flowing robes. It seems that he exerted an influence upon my destiny, but how, or in what way, I am perplexed to tell."

"Well," said Frank Reade, as he gradually turned on the electricity, and started the wonderful metallic steeds, "let us hope that we may yet be instrumental in helping you find your parents, Miss Runee. But as we are bound on a dangerous mission in search of a missing man, far away in the heart of Central Asia, where no civilized man has ever penetrated and returned alive, we must try to leave you in some place of safety."

"Yes," assented Moreland. "Tell us, beautiful Runee, is there no friend whom you can rely upon to protect you in India?"

"There is, but he is far away. The English resident of Lahore is my friend. A timely warning which I sent him once when in the north, whither Madra had transferred his band of Bayaderes, saved the officer from assassination at a travelers' bungalow on a lonely road. I had overheard the plot, in which, indeed, old Madra, who is secretly a member of the Strangers' caste, was concerned," said Runee.

"We will convey you to Lahore. Mohammed is familiar with the country, and he will guide us. I flatter myself that my Electric Team can annihilate distance and surmount every obstacle that may interpose in our way. Yes, Miss Runee, we will see you safely under the protection of the English resident of Lahore, and then we will continue on to search for our missing friend, Richard Carlyle," said Frank Reade.

"Richard Carlyle!" reiterated Runee, with exclamatory emphasis. "Ah, that was the name of the European Hydra, the spy of Wolandah, mentioned."

"What! Can it be that you know aught of my missing cousin, Richard? Explain your words. Tell me everything pertaining to your remark," said the doctor, with great excitement and solicitude.

While the others—all of whom shared the good doctor's suddenly awakened interest—also listened with greatest attention, Runee went on thus:

"I overheard one Hydra, who is working secretly for the overthrow of the present Rajah of Jagpore, and in the interest of Wolandah, say to a convert to his views among the Temple Guards that he had just come from a pilgrimage to the far northern part of Afghanistan, and that a medal of gold which he exhibited had been given him by an Afghan chief for the performance of a secret political service. The medal was afterward exhibited to me, and Hydra read the name Richard Carlyle, which was engraved on it."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE TREASURE MAP.

"Ah, this may be the first clew to the present whereabouts of Richard Carlyle!" said Frank Reade as Runee paused.

"Yes, I know Hydra. His word is to be trusted. We must find him, and he must tell us who the Afghan chief was who gave him the medal, and in what part of the country he resides," said Mohammed.

"True; the man may be able to give us information that will prove invaluable—that may lead us to find Richard Carlyle, if he be yet in the land of the living, as I trust he may be," assented the doctor.

"But you said, Miss Runee, that you saw the gold medal which was engraved with the name Richard Carlyle. Tell us what it was like. Describe it to us, if you please?" he added.

"The medal was in the form of a cross, and it was set in a circle; yes, a cross in a circle, that was the form of the medal," replied Runee.

"I fancied so. That is the medal of honor bestowed by the International Geographical and Historical Association for achievements in the field of discovery and travel. My cousin, Richard, received the cross of honor four years ago when he returned from a successful journey through the wilds of Siberia," said Dr. Vaneyke.

Then he turned to Mohammed and asked:

"Is there any way which you can devise whereby we can communicate with the man called Hydra?"

"Not at present, sahib. At this moment Hydra is far away. But he and Wolandah and I are to meet at a certain point on our route to the Afghan border, and then I promise that we shall learn all that it is in the power of Hydra to tell us of the medal and the missing man," replied Mohammed.

With this the doctor and his friends were compelled to be satisfied.

"Well. Here's luck till the missing mon, be-dad!" said Barney, taking a pull at his flask.

Then he offered it to Mohammed, saying:

"Take a pull av rale ould mountain dew, Moham, old boy, an' begob, we won't count that wan."

"No," replied Mohammed. "I have always refused the strong water of the Europeans," and he made a gesture of disgust.

Barney turned to Pomp and winked. The two seemed to delight in the Irishman's attempts to tease Mohammed, and the darty grinned from ear to ear as he said:

"Why doan' yer offer suffin' to some pusson dat doan' go baek on de juice ob de rye?"

"Faith an' it's because av me principles. Bedad an' me principles are timperance, but me practice is not. Here's lookin' at yez, Pomp," replied Barney, provokingly, as he drank again.

Meanwhile the Electric Team was proceeding swiftly northward.

Frank Reade and Mohammed sat on the driver's box, with a great sun-umbrella over their heads, or the day was sultry, and presently all save the young inventor, Mohammed and Pomp, who seemed to enjoy the heat, retired to the interior of the vehicle.

"I think we are well rid of old Tippoo Kahn and his men, and I do not anticipate that they will attempt to follow us further," said Frank Reade to Mohammed.

"Sahib, you are wrong. You do not know the character of the Strangler Chief. He is relentless and as tenacious of purpose as mortal man can be," replied Mohammed.

"Then you think we have not seen the last of him?"

"Such indeed is my opinion. You must know that undoubtedly Tippoo Kahn has set his heart upon possessing the beautiful Nauteh girl whom we have wrested from him."

"True. The old rascal will have a powerful motive in pursuing us. He will be attempting to regain possession of the most beautiful creature in India."

"But that is not all."

"Ah, I think you are about to allude to the gold secret of the Parsees."

"Yes, Tippoo Kahn is one of a sworn league of desperate and daring men, who have vowed to wrest the great treasure secret from me."

"And so you think they will follow you?"

"Yes. The emissaries of the treasure-league, every member of which is also a Phansigar, will never leave off the pursuit of you, sahib, as long as I am a member of your party, and perhaps I had better leave you."

"No. That must not be thought of. But once we are in Afghanistan we need not anticipate that the men who are leagued against you will follow further."

"Wrong, Sahib. I did but just say the enemies of Wolandah and myself would never give over the pursuit."

"But in Afghanistan they will be without power?"

"No. Gold will be used to bribe the fierce, wild Afghan chiefs. I tell you, sahib, the Phansigars are striving for untold wealth, and they will spend their rupees freely."

Frank Reade and Mohammed continued to converse as they rode along together. The East Indian guided the course of the inventor.

Mohammed's knowledge of the country enabled him to select the most desirable roads, and the most direct route toward Lahore.

Excellent progress was made by the wonderful electric conveyance, and meanwhile, in the interior of the coach, Tom Moreland, who had really fallen "head over heels" in love with Runee at first sight, was cultivating her acquaintance most earnestly.

At midday a halt was made under a wide-spreading tree whose patriarchal branches, thickly

leaved, served to exclude the direct rays of the sun.

A luncheon of fruit and bread with a glass of light wine was served by Pomp, for the inventor had taken care to provide supplies for a long journey, and after an hour's halt the electric coach was started again.

The approach of night found the Electric Team traversing a fertile country, where native villages were occasionally met with. The inhabitants were astounded at the sight of the remarkable invention, as, indeed, they well might be, and they turned out en masse to gaze at the flying vehicle, always discreetly keeping at a considerable distance.

After nightfall the country changed in appearance again, and soon grew wild. The jungles spread out on every side, and the road became narrower and grown up with small bushes as though it was seldom traveled.

Finally the Electric Team arrived at a "traveler's bungalow," or public building, built for the accommodation of travelers. These travelers' bungalows are not in charge of any one. The doors stand open. No one lives in the house, and every traveler is free to enter and pass the night.

Mohammed assured Frank Reade that there was no village near, and the party resolved to halt for the remainder of the night.

The electricity was turned off, and the mechanical team was drawn up, and stopped at one side of the jungle path near the "travelers' bungalow."

Then Frank and Mohammed, merely as a precautionary proceeding, made a reconnaissance in the vicinity, for if there was any native party lurking near, they desired to know it.

The young inventor and the East Indian had entered the jungle, and advanced perhaps half a mile, shaping their course so as to make a detour around the travelers' bungalow, when it chanced that Frank was at some few paces in the rear of his companion, and out of sight of him, by reason of intervening bushes.

All at once Frank was startled and alarmed by a terrible cry from Mohammed. The voice of the East Indian was full of terror, and Frank Reade, thinking some dreadful danger menaced his comrade, sprang quickly forward, with his rifle ready to use upon the instant.

In a moment Frank came in sight of Mohammed under the moonlight.

A cry of alarm and wonder escaped Frank then.

He saw Mohammed struggling in the grasp of a huge boa constrictor, the largest and most dreaded of East Indian serpents.

The sealy monster had swung himself down from the limb of a tree, and caught Mohammed in his crushing folds before the poor fellow was aware of his peril.

The young American knew that not a moment must be lost in rescuing the East Indian, or the life would be entirely crushed out of him.

Already Mohammed's strength was gone and he could not speak. The young inventor carried a large hunting-knife in his belt, and he whipped out the weapon and stole upon the serpent, which had not seen him. Then one quick blow and Frank almost severed the huge boa's head from his body.

At once the crushing pressure of those elastic, muscular folds which were dealing death to Mohammed began to relax. The serpent had his death blow, and in a moment Frank extricated the East Indian from the embrace of the monster.

He thought, at first, that Mohammed was dead, and he loosened the tunic at his throat and breast and felt his heart beat faintly. But as the light of the moon fell upon Mohammed's bronzed, bare breast Frank saw that it was strangely tattooed, and a second glance revealed to the young inventor that the tattooing on Mohammed's breast was a perfectly and artistically drawn map.

Frank's wonderment and surprise may be imagined. But while he was staring at the tattooing Mohammed opened his eyes, and the next instant he understood that Frank saw the map upon his breast, and a strange look came upon his face.

As soon as Mohammed could move a hand he covered his breast, and then when at length he regained breath and voice, he said:

"You have discovered my secret. The map on my breast is the clew to the hidden treasure of the Parsees, which Tippoo Kahn and the league of the jungle are seeking to discover."

"I suspected as much," replied Frank.

"Some time I will tell you the story of the Parsees' great gold secret. Now, I thank thee for my life, O Sahib. But hark—I heard a voice," said Mohammed.

He and Frank listened in profound silence, and presently they both heard low voices. Then stealing in the direction whence the sounds of the speakers emanated, they presently discovered a line of elephant riders traversing a path which Mohammed said was a secret way, used only by the dreaded Phansigars.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BLAZING STARS.

"THOSE men are Phansigars, and Tippoo Kahn is among them," said Mohammed in a thrilling whisper.

It was so. Frank Reade saw and recognized the chief of the Phansigars as Mohammed spoke.

The young American understood that by taking a secret route, which was shorter than the way traversed by the Electric Team, and urging swift-footed elephants to their best speed, Tippoo Kahn had made almost as good time as the wonderful Electric Team.

In silence Frank Reade and Mohammed continued to watch the elephant-riders until they all filed past and a bend in the secret jungle path concealed them from sight.

Then Frank said:

"We must return to the coach. It seems to me that the path taken by Tippoo Kahn and his band will bring them out on the jungle road which we are traveling a short distance north of the travelers' bungalow."

Mohammed assented, and he and Frank Reade quickly made their way back to the electric coach.

There was every reason to anticipate an attack, unless the Phansigars pressed on without discovering that they had passed the Electric Team. To have started the Electric Team would have been to overtake the Phansigars, and so destroy the possible chance of eluding them.

The young inventor decided to stay where he was, and all hands were called to hold a consultation.

"I think," said Frank, "I'll 'take time by the forelock' and prepare for the Phansigars. We must work some of our electrical contrivances to astonish and frighten the natives."

Then he opened the supply chest and took out six large electric torpedoes, and directed Pomp and Barney to take them and a great coil of slender brass wire, and hang the torpedoes in the trees in a circle about the electric vehicle.

To each of the torpedoes was attached a wire which communicated with the electric battery, and each torpedo, moreover, was capped with a ball of cotton saturated with oil.

The torpedoes were divided equally between Barney and Pomp. The Irishman took three of them and the darty three. Barney was delighted at the prospect of another fight, and he said to Pomp:

"Be the harp av Tara, it's a bit av a ruotion we'll have wance more! Faith, an' if it don't come soon, its mesel' as will be afther gettin' rusty for want av exercise. But, begob, here's a chance for sport. I'll bet yez a pint av the best that I git me three torpeters hung up furst."

"Done, I doan' low no white trash to git ahead ob me," replied Pomp, and then they both scrambled up a tree with one of the torpedoes each.

It was a sharp race between them, but Barney got his torpedo hung and reached the ground ahead of Pomp. In the second case Pomp got his torpedo in place first.

"Now comes detug o' wah! Gollie, Irish, I'se a-gwine fo' to beat you, suah as you is a foot high!" cried Pomp.

"Not much, begorra! Sure an' the nagur was niver hatched as could bate an Irishman at anything," retorted Barney.

Then both he and Pomp scrambled up a tree; each carried the third torpedo.

Barney got his hung up all right, and he was scrambling down his tree when, as Pomp was also descending, his torpedo, which in his haste to win the race he had failed to properly secure, fell to the ground.

There was a detonation and the torpedo exploded.

The grass and the shrubbery of the jungle was very dry, and there would have been an immediate conflagration as the result of the explosion had not Frank Reade instantly turned a stream of water from the hose attached to the water-tank in the rear of the coach upon the exploded torpedo.

"The explosion of the torpedo will be heard by the enemy, and they will surely attack us now! How could you be so careless, Pomp?" cried Frank.

"Begob, I'll break the nagur's head! Ye black-guard, stand forninst me the space of a muskeeto's wink. Come an, ye blunderin' moak!" cried Barney, and he threw off his coat and made a rush at Pomp.

"Go 'way, man! Go 'way! You heah me remark, I'se bad when I git's mad! Yes, sah, I'se a dangerous pusson. Go 'way, man. I done tole yer de las' time," said Pomp, and he backed away.

But Barney was aching for a fight, and he danced about Pomp with hands up in boxing style until suddenly the darty managed to clinch him. Then they tussled in the direction of the coach until

hey came in contact with it. Frank called out to them to desist, but they did not seem to hear him.

"I'll take some of the fight out of you!" cried Frank, and he turned the hose on the two belligerent fellows and drenched them in a moment. Then as they went stumbling against the metal rod which ran around the coach, Frank reached behind him and quickly touched a lever.

The electricity was at once sent to the rod in a powerful current, and Pomp and Barney received a shock which made them leap about like a pair of jumping-jacks.

The scene was really laughable despite the proximity of peril. Barney and Pomp were still dancing about when Mohammed, who had stolen northward along the jungle road a short distance, hastened back and brought news of the Phansigars' approach.

"They heard the report of the torpedo, and they are coming. Tippoo Kahn and old Madra are in the lead, and they are determined on a desperate battle, I think," said Mohammed.

"Then we will be prepared for them. Let every one put on their suits of mail. I have mine on now, and while Moreland and the doctor take their places in the interior of the coach with the lady and place themselves at the loop-holes, let the others come to the top of the coach," said Frank.

The young inventor's orders were quickly obeyed.

Runees grasped Moreland's arm in terror, as she said:

"You will not let them drag me back to slavery?"

The young artist pressed the hand of the beautiful girl, and murmured:

"Runees, I would give my life for you. I will kill Tippoo Kahn rather than see you retaken."

His words were impassioned, but he did not mean them to be extravagant. He was entirely sincere, and Runees gave him a smile which made him hope that he might win the lovely girl's heart yet. But almost immediately the elephant riders appeared.

Frank Reade had trained the cannon to cover the road over which they were approaching, and he, with Barney, Pomp and Mohammed, leveled a battery of repeating Winchester at the enemy.

The dark figures of the elephant riders and their huge steeds were outlined against the starlit sky, and they came on silently. But all at once they halted.

Tippoo Kahn had observed the array of weapons on the top of the coach, and the ferocious jungle chief, who prided himself on his cunning, was now bent upon a diplomatic ruse.

He knew the Europeans would not surrender Mohammed, but he hoped to be able to get them to deliver Runees to him.

Tippoo Kahn urged his elephant to the front and fluttered a white handkerchief in token of the fact that he desired a confab.

"If you have anything to say be quick about it, for in a few moments our great juggler will call the blazing stars down upon you," said Frank Reade, sternly.

"Sahib," replied the Phansigar, "we come peacefully. Our daughter has fled from the temple. You have carried her away, and we would buy her back. Yes, we will pay you a thousand rupees for the Nautch maid called Runees."

"The old devil, I have me make a sneak on him. Begob, I'll crack his head whilst yez are talkin' wid the spalpeen," said the Irishman in a whisper.

"Nonsense!" answered Frank to Barney, and then he replied to Tippoo Kahn:

"We do not deal in slaves. We have rescued a poor girl from you villains, and we shall never surrender her to you again. Now go, I command you, or the blazing stars shall fall among the tree-tops."

"Bah! You are not so great a juggler as to do that. Even our greatest fakirs cannot draw down the stars," retorted Tippoo Kahn, in a tone of haughty contempt.

Then the companions of the young inventor understood what he meant to accomplish through the agency of the combination of explosives and fire balls which were suspended in the tree-tops.

The jungle chief turned to his men and addressed some order to them in the native tongue, and at once the lithe, swarthy fellows slid from their huge animals, and using the elephants as a breastwork, began to urge them forward toward the Electric Team.

The natives were completely screened in their approach by the bodies of the elephants, and it seemed that the great animal whose hide would in some instances turn a bullet, would come crashing down upon the electric conveyance while the defenders of the wonderful invention were unable to reach the men behind them.

But suddenly Frank Reade connected the fine wires which ran to the torpedoes in the tree-tops,

with the battery, and the next moment a current of electricity shot along the wires, and five distinct explosions rang out in the tree tops. Instantly the fire balls burst into a series of brilliant flames.

"Behold! The stars fall!" shouted Frank Reade.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### AMONG THE FLAMES.

THE electrical experiment performed by Frank Reade with the torpedoes and fire-balls was a weird and astonishing exhibition.

But the question of vital import to the young American inventor and his comrades was, would the strange and apparently magical illumination frighten off the fierce band of Phansigars whom Tippoo Kahn had brought against them?

The result of the application of the electrical current to the wires uniting the torpedoes in the tree tops was even more wonderful and startling than Frank Reade anticipated.

When the explosion of the torpedoes occurred the gloom that brooded in shadows among the trees was suddenly illuminated with a shower of red, flaming sparks, as though a star had bursted there.

Then the inflammable cotton balls saturated with oil burst into a splendid flame, and in a moment the Electric Team was surrounded by a zone or girdle of flame that seemed to hang suspended between earth and sky.

The dry foliage furnished fuel for the flames and the conflagration leaped from tree top to tree top with surprising rapidity.

The circle of fire encompassed the Electric Team, gleaming lurid against the black space in which it was suspended, and it was as though the wand of Aladdin, or some weird, supernatural power had been employed to evoke the cordon of flame.

And the ring of red fire was like a suddenly interposed barrier which a mystic unseen hand had placed about the Electric Team to shield it from the foe.

From the burning tree tops the sparks fell in showers, lighting up the shadowy space underneath with weird and fitful gleams.

The monkeys, frightened from their retreats among the branches, scampered away, uttering screams of alarm and chattering to each other like a legion of magpies. Seen in the strange fitful light these little creatures assumed a grotesque and horrible resemblance to dwarfish little old men of the woods.

The birds beat away on wildly waving pinions, and their shrill, alarmed notes contributed to the pandemonium of sounds.

But, above all, the shrill, trumpet-like screams of the jungle-dwellers' elephants pealed out. These animals were terrified, for, perhaps of all the animal kingdom, the elephant has the greatest fear of fire.

Like the whistle of a score of locomotives all blowing in unison was the elephantine chorus of alarm. And the wind sent the showers of sparks from the conflagration in the tree tops hurtling back upon the great elephants like a shower of shattered meteors.

The jungle-men regained the backs of their elephants with alacrity, and they strove to control them and cause them to stand firm.

Tippoo Kahn's voice was heard above the tumult shouting to his swarthy followers, encouraging and entreating them to charge the Electric Team of the Europeans.

But the elephants could no more be driven under the circle of fire in the tree tops than the trees themselves could be riven from the earth by the hands of the jungle-men.

The elephantine legion was on the contrary utterly demoralized and bent upon immediate retreat.

All at once a terrible roar rang out above the trumpet voices of the elephants and the sounds of the conflagration.

Then a splendid full grown tiger which was driven from his lair leaped away from the flames and charged straight toward the elephants.

If anything had been wanting to complete the rout of the great beasts, the advent of the jungle terror would have supplied it.

And the natives fully shared their animals' alarm.

"The tiger—the tiger!" they shouted to each other, in frightened voices, and now they sought to encourage the retreat of the elephants instead of retarding it.

And Tippoo Kahn gnashed his teeth in all the fury of impotent rage and disappointment as he rode away beside old Madra, the master of the temple Bayaderes.

"The European magician conquers again! By the faith of the men of the jungle, old Madra, thou shalt repay me, rupee for rupee, all that I gave you for Runees, the Nautch girl," fairly hissed Tippoo Kahn, his dark face distorted with passion.

The old master of the temple dancers replied deprecatingly:

"Have patience. You can trust the word of Madra when he speaks to a brother of 'Kulee in good faith. Runees, the beautiful, is not lost to you."

"A truce to idle talk. You shall pay me back my money this very night," Tippoo Kahn uttered sibilantly.

"No—no! You shall have the girl yet. The Brahmin Jagarnes shall help me. Fortunately he arrived at the temple yesterday. The aged one is bound on a pilgrimage. Ah, a ruse is forming in my mind to get back Runees. Cunning shall succeed against the Europeans where force has failed."

"Tell me your plot; speak plainly, Madra."

"Ah. You must know that Jagarnes, the aged Brahmin, is he who gave Runees to me when she was but a child."

Tippoo Kahn's swarthy face was suddenly lighted up by a suspicious flash from his keen eyes, and he said quickly:

"And yet you assured me neither you or any one else knew who the girl Runees really was. But it seems that Jagarnes, the old, must know where the girl came from?"

"No. He has assured me that he found the child in the jungle where some European fugitives had abandoned her or lost her in the hurry and terror of their flight from Nana Sahib's pursuing Sepoys. It was during the mutiny."

"Yes, and now as to your plot. How do you mean that the Brahmin shall serve you?"

"Listen."

Tippoo Kahn became silent and attentive, as speaking rapidly old Madra developed a most surprising and crafty project looking to the recapture of the beautiful Nautch girl.

But when the jungle-men were gone, Frank Reade determined to proceed on his journey.

The coach was soon under way, and the vehicle made excellent time along the highway. Nothing was seen of the Phansigars for the present. It seemed they had sought the fastness of the dense thicket. But whether they had abandoned the pursuit of the inventor's party permanently or not Frank could not decide.

The sky threatened a storm as the night advanced. Great dark banks of rain clouds drifted up from the southern horizon, and the darkness became more and more dense.

The electric coach bowled steadily onward, the electric light from the great globe in the front of the vehicle illuminating the road ahead.

But all at once the light of the electric lamp was extinguished. The hurry and excitement of recent events had caused Frank to neglect the lamp and the magnesium wire which fed the flame under the electric current had been consumed.

Frank understood the cause of the failure of the light at once, and, giving the main lever to the doctor, he set about repairing his negligence.

The young inventor was getting out the needed supplies for the great lamp, when all at once the vehicle, which was going on in the darkness, stopped with a crash.

"Quick, doctor! reverse the lever!" shouted Frank on the instant.

Dr. Vaneyke acted promptly. With one movement he threw the main lever back to the last notch, so as to turn off the entire current of electricity.

It was well he did so, as was presently seen.

Frank Reade lost not a moment in getting the electric lamp in order again, and when, presently, its brilliant light was reflected ahead again, a fallen tree was seen across the road.

With this obstruction the Electric Team had come in violent contact.

Moving the levers which controlled the machinery employed in retrograde movement, Frank cautiously backed the electric coach.

But at once a grating, jarring sound informed the young inventor that there was something wrong with the machinery.

Frank was alarmed, and he said anxiously:

"I fear the machinery has sustained a serious injury."

"I trust not, for if such is the case we may find ourselves in a dilemma," said the doctor.

Frank alighted from the vehicle and proceeded to examine the Electric Team and the conveyance with the greatest care.

He soon discovered the cause of the sound which had alarmed him, and he said:

"I find one of the delicate steel bars in the interior of the hollow metal horses is broken, thus letting drop one of the main cogwheels and throwing the clock-work which moves the horse out of gear."

"Can the bar be repaired?" asked the doctor, in great anxiety.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE ELECTRIC TEAM BREAKS DOWN.

"I THINK so. I have an extra bar among the supplies. Barney, get me one of those small steel bars marked 'A.' You will find it in the red chest in the locker," replied Frank.

"Yes, sir; I'll have the same out in a jiffy," replied Barney.

"And bring me the tool-box, too," continued Frank.

Barney got out the required steel bar and the mechanical implements, and Frank set about unscrewing the broken bar.

He removed it, and placed the new bar in its place.

Meanwhile, instructed by the inventor, Pomp and Barney produced axes, and began to cut away at the fallen tree.

"Sure and we'll soon have the tree out av the road," said Barney, as he and Pomp plied their axes lustily.

Having secured the bar properly, Frank entered the coach and gently started the machinery.

But again there was a grating, jarring sound, and only one of the horses moved properly.

"Still something wrong!" exclaimed Frank, and once more he examined the interior of the metallic horse that refused to respond to the electric current.

"Well, as I live, the main upper shaft of the cogs has snapped close to its bearings so that I did not at first see it. But, thank Providence, I have a duplicate one," said Frank, when he had concluded his second inspection.

He opened the supply chest and got out the shaft he wanted as he spoke.

It required a good hour's work to get out the broken bar and substitute the new one this time.

Finally, however, this task was completed.

Then Frank again turned on the electricity to see if everything worked right.

But at once a sharp snap sounded, and a moment subsequently, upon examining the new bar which he had just put in place, Frank found that it had broken off short at one end.

A very close examination then revealed the fact that the new bar had a flaw in it which had been made when it was originally forged.

"To think that I should have brought a defective bar with me! This is a calamity I did not deem possible," cried Frank, in alarm.

"Have you not another of these main upper shafts with you?" asked Moreland.

"No. And now we are indeed in a bad fix. I cannot mend the broken steel. The machinery can only be repaired by a new bar," answered Frank.

"And until that is done we cannot proceed?" asked the doctor.

"Certainly not. The broken shaft is one of the most important parts of the machinery," Frank answered.

"This is really too bad. What is to be done?" said Moreland.

"Here we must remain, or abandon the Electric Team, unless we can procure a new bar, and we cannot think of giving up our electric conveyance," stated Frank.

"But can a duplicate bar be secured in this country, think you?" asked Moreland.

"Yes, but we should have to have one forged at some town where there is a foundry," replied Frank.

"Sahib," said Mohammed, "the nearest town is some twenty miles distant. But at that place there is a foundry where steel and iron are manufactured. The English established the works some years ago. The route to the place I speak of is through a wild country where the Phansigars have many strongholds and danger lurks all along the route."

"But we must have a new bar," said Frank.

"Begob an' I will go for it," said Barney bravely.

"No. You do not know the route," replied Frank.

"But I do, sahib, and if you will permit me, I will try to reach Banole—such is the name of the town."

"You are a brave fellow. But alone you must not go. Your enemies will seek to waylay you if you are discovered. You must have at least one brave comrade with you," said Frank.

"Gollie! I see the coon to go wid Mahom!" cried Pomp, eagerly.

"Begob, an' I was the wan to volunteer furst, an' it's me right to go wid Mahom. Faith, an' I sint a bit av a ruction on the way, an' no nagur shall bate me out av me chance for an illigant bit av a shindy," said Barney.

"I will accompany Mohammed," Moreland declared.

"It seems to me, since there are so many dangers in the way, the fairest way of deciding who shall accompany Mohammed will be to draw lots," said Frank.

"Yes. Bedad, that's it!" cried Barney.

"Gollie, dat suits dis coon!" affirmed Pomp.

"I am satisfied to leave it to chance," assented Moreland.

"Very well, then, in that way we will decide the question, and Runee shall hold the lots," said Frank.

Then he instructed Runee to prepare five sticks, and make one of them shorter than any of the others.

"The man who draws the short stick shall go with Mohammed," said Frank in conclusion.

Runee understood what was required, and she quickly procured the sticks, and held them with their ends protruding from her hands so that no one could tell which was the shortest.

Then the drawing began.

First Frank drew and then the doctor.

Moreland, the ducky and Barney followed, and the brave Irishman uttered a whoop of satisfaction as he drew the shortest straw.

"Begob an' the luck is wid me this toime. Be the powers I go wid Mahom, an' if the jungle nagurs fall foul av the pair of us it's batin' the heads av them we'll be afther doin'!" he said.

"You are about to set out on a perilous mission, Barney, and it may be that we shall never see you and Mohammed again," said Frank, seriously.

"That's true for ye, Masther Frank, an' if so be we do not come back, you'll know we went under like brave min, an' it was no picnic the nagurs wuz afther havin' wid us," replied Barney.

"I am sure of your bravery and devotion," said Frank.

"And now you had best lose no time in setting out. It will be necessary for you to take the broken shaft with you to serve as a model for the new one," he added.

"Right ye are, Masther Frank, but the shaft is not heavy, and we can carry it easily by takin' turns," replied Barney.

"We will be off at once," said Mohammed.

"You had better wear your suits of mail," suggested the doctor.

"Yes," assented Frank, "put on your armor by all means and go well armed."

"Trust an Irishman to look out for number one," responded Barney cheerfully.

Then he and the East Indian made the necessary preparation.

Finally, clad in their steel armor, they were ready to take leave of their friends.

So much depended upon the journey the two brave fellows were about to undertake, and they were exposed to so much peril, that their friends were serious and apprehensive for the result.

All shook hands with Barney and Mohammed warmly, and Pomp said:

"Gollie, if any ob dem no-account natives done got away wid my ole pard, Barney, I see a-gwine to git even wid dem suah. Good-bye, Barney, an' took keer ob yerself."

"Good fortune attend you, and may you return safely," said Frank.

Finally the East Indian and the Irishman strode away.

Barney carried the broken shaft and Mohammed went in advance as guide.

Their friends watched them until they disappeared beyond the range of the electric light, and then they discussed the situation and resolved to keep a sharp lookout for their enemies while they were forced to remain where they were.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## DESPAIR.

LEST the electric light on the coach might serve to attract their enemies to them Frank extinguished it.

Then, while Runee retired to the interior of the coach, Frank, the doctor and Moreland seated themselves, and while they kept a vigilant watch they conversed in low tones.

Pomp, stretched out near by, listened in silence.

They talked of India, and Frank was entertained.

"India is a great country, but the British system does not do much to better the condition of the natives," said the doctor.

"So I should say," assented Frank.

"You know India is divided into British territory and feudatory States acknowledging the sovereignty of Great Britain."

"Yes."

"The government is intrusted to a secretary of state for India."

"So I have heard."

"The executive authority is vested in the governor-general by the British crown."

"And what about the power of the native rajahs?"

"They are really under the governor, but they are allowed to do about as they please with their

native subjects, only so the regular tax is paid to England."

"And how do the native despots protect themselves?"

"Instead of trying to elevate their race, the rajahs grind them down, and seek to keep them in ignorance."

"Yes, the Rajah of Jagpore is a sample of the native rulers," said Frank.

"And yet India is the richest and most populous dependency of the English crown," said Moreland.

"Right," replied the doctor.

"India contains more than a million square miles of territory, according to statistics," said Frank.

"True, and there are more than a half million native and foreign inhabitants," said the doctor.

"Yet agriculture is backward," remarked Moreland.

"Yes, and the means of transportation is poor through most of the country," rejoined the doctor.

"What are the leading products in the line of grain?" asked Frank.

"Rice, cotton, indigo, opium, sugar cane, corn, wheat, and the first five of these products are largely exported."

"Some of the wheat is imported, I think," observed Moreland.

"Yes, wheat is brought from the great grain fields of Russia," assented the doctor, and he added:

"And Calcutta is the capital, and railways and telegraph lines, which are all in the hands of Europeans, are penetrating where in other days only the elephants used to travel."

"That's so, doctor, and I think there is a great future for India," Frank said.

"How about educational advantages?" asked Moreland.

"Education is progressing. Missionaries have done good work, and the government has established many schools."

"In New York I have seen wonderful table sets of hand-carved brass dishes, which were said to have been made by the convicts at the India prison of Benares. Is it true that the convicts really make those beautiful brass services?" inquired Frank.

"Yes. The natives of certain classes are expert brass-workers, and this industry has been utilized by the government at the convict prison of Benares. The convicts thus become self-supporting, and those who have no trade when they come are expert brass-carvers when they leave. All the convicts sent to Benares are sentenced for long terms," answered the doctor.

Thus the conversation ran on until some time had elapsed.

Finally the gray light of a new day began to dispel the darkness, and soon the glorious sun banished all the gloom.

Then Frank and his comrades, after partaking of the morning meal, finished the work of removing the fallen tree from the road, and then Frank set out alone to make a scout in the neighborhood to ascertain if any enemies were lurking near.

The young inventor did not mean that the jungle-men should take the Electric Team by surprise.

Frank made a careful reconnoiter, and he did not discover any evidence of the proximity of the men of the Phansigar's band.

Considerably reassured, Frank returned to the Electric Team and made a cheering report to his friends.

The great danger was that they might be attacked by the enemy while they were unable to move with the electric conveyance.

The jungle-men might, in case they were discovered, attack them in overwhelming numbers, and since they could not avail themselves of the speedy Electric Team, they must in such an event certainly be captured.

The day passed and there was no alarm.

The next night was divided into three watches. One of the three men was always on guard, and since their lives might depend upon their vigilance, it may well be surmised that they were the most faithful sentinels.

But that night went by and nothing occurred to alarm the party.

The second day passed safely. But again Frank made a scout. Still he made no discovery of moment.

The third day since Mohammed and Barney set out to go to the village to get the new shaft dawned, and it found Frank Reade and his friends very hopeful.

"I specs," said Pomp, "dat dem yeller niggers ain't a-gwine to bodder us no mo' 'fore Barney an' Moham gits back."

"I hope you are right, Pomp. I think our friends should return to-day, surely. If they do not come before nightfall, I shall conclude that

they have fallen into the hands of the enemy," said Frank.

The hours wore on. A constant lookout was kept for Barney and the East Indian, and finally, about noon, Frank started out to make his usual daily scout. He proceeded in the direction taken by Barney and Mohammed.

Frank was returning some hours later, when all at once, in the midst of a jungle, he heard the sound of native voices, and presently he saw a file of full three score swarthy jungle-men file out into the "open"—one of those small interglades frequently met with in the East Indian jungles.

Frank was concealed, and he listened eagerly to the conversation of the Phansigars as they marched by his hiding-place.

He could understand a few of the native words, and he caught enough to make out that their scouts had discovered the Electric Team, and that they were aware that there was something wrong with it.

Further, it seemed that this party were on their way to unite with another band at a short distance, and then a combined attack was to be made upon the Electric Team.

Frank was in a state of terrible alarm when he understood all this, and hastened to make his way stealthily back to the electric conveyance.

He arrived at the coach in safety, and hastened to inform his comrades of his terrible discovery.

"There is no escape this time. We can only fight until we fall. Better perish here than be taken captive by the merciless jungle demons. Oh, Heaven! that Barney and Mohammed might come!" said Frank in despair.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### BESIEGED.

THE American inventor and his comrades were now in the worst situation yet encountered.

But Frank Reade's naturally hopeful spirit and determined nature soon triumphed over the sentiment of despair which had dominated his mind upon the first consideration of the desperate circumstances.

"We have an excellent fortress in the electric coach, at all events, and we are well supplied with provisions and ammunition," said Frank, presently, in a more hopeful tone.

"Yes," assented the brave old doctor. "And we can stand a long siege. It will cost the jungle-men dear to take the Electric Team."

"True enough, doctor, and now to make ready for the impending attack," said Frank.

The entire party then retired to the interior of the coach.

The door was closed and secured, and the perforated metallic blinds were carefully drawn over the windows, but the loop-holes were left open, so that through them the defenders of the electric vehicle could discharge their weapons at the enemy.

The ammunition chest was opened and placed conveniently within reach of the party, and the repeating rifles were all examined and carefully loaded.

Then the four brave men put on their suits of mail, and leaving Dr. Vaneyke and Moreland at the loop-holes, Frank Reade and Pomp ascended to the top of the coach.

As we know their armor of tempered steel was impervious to bullets, the inventors and Pomp were not exposing themselves to a great risk in taking their position on the top of the coach.

It was very necessary that they should occupy the top or roof of the electric coach, in order to work the cannon which was placed there.

From the interior of the vehicle a large quantity of ammunition was passed up to the roof and deposited conveniently beside the cannon, which was loaded and primed ready to open fire on the enemy whenever Frank Reade desired to do so.

And with them on the roof the young inventor and Pomp had their excellent repeating Winchester rifles, which they meant should render them good service at long range.

All the party were now cool and composed. They had been under fire too often previously to feel any of the fear which might have taken possession even of brave men on the eve of their first battle.

In a short period of time all the preparations which suggested themselves to Frank Reade's mind for the repulse of the impending battle were made.

Then the party quietly and calmly awaited the appearance of the expected enemy.

Rune experienced great alarm, but she tried to appear brave and hopeful, and Moreland sought to sustain her courage by encouraging remarks.

Some time, which was a period of anxious suspense for Frank Reade and his comrades, elapsed, after all their preparations were completed, before the enemy made their appearance.

But finally the approach of the Phansigars was discerned.

The jungle-men appeared in great numbers advancing along the road from the front.

But when they were almost within rifle range of the electric coach the enemy divided their forces into two sections, and deployed right and left into the jungle, so as to spread out and surround the coach under cover.

It was not long before the Phansigars were heard shouting to each other from all sides, and then the besieged Americans knew that they were completely environed—hemmed in upon every hand by the enemy.

The battle opened almost as soon as the environment of the electric coach was accomplished.

The jungle-men advanced from all sides simultaneously. Many of them were armed with English carbines, and they discharged a fusillade of bullets at the electric coach.

From the interior of the vehicle Dr. Vaneyke and Moreland promptly returned the volley of the enemy, while from the roof Frank Reade discharged the cannon.

And Pomp now began to act as a sharp-shooter, and with unerring aim the black dead-shot picked off the swarthy enemy.

The first assault of the attacking party was repulsed, but they were determined, and another and another charge ensued.

But the defenders of the electric coach fought like heroes, and each charge against them was met and foiled by destructive volleys from their rifles and the cannon.

The battle raged until night-fall, and then there was a lull, but Frank Reade saw that the enemy was preparing for a protracted siege, and he dreaded the ensuing night.

At last darkness fell, and then the electric light was ignited, so as to prevent the enemy stealing up unseen.

But all at once the young inventor discerned two dark moving objects crawling toward the coach from the rear, where the shadows behind the electric light were darkest.

The young inventor directed Pomp's attention to the stealthily advancing forms, and Pomp whispered:

"Golly, I see 'em, an' I see a-gwine to pick dem off."

He lifted his rifle and took careful aim at the foremost of the dark forms. But suddenly he dropped his weapon, exclaiming in a thrilling whisper:

"Afore de Lord, dat am Barney an' Moham!"

The next instant Frank saw that Pomp was right, and in a moment, sure enough, Barney and Mohammed reached the coach and were admitted.

With them the two brave fellows brought the new shaft which they had been sent to obtain, and how they were welcomed may be surmised.

"Now to repair the machinery. I'll extinguish the electric light for a time, and will depend on the moon to enable us to see the approach of the enemy, for I do not wish them to know what I am about," said Frank, and he put out the electric light.

Then he got out of the coach, and having opened the hollow metal horse, he placed therein a small lamp, which gave him light to see to work by.

With the new shaft, which proved to be an exact duplicate of the broken one, Frank at once set about repairing the machinery. About an hour was thus consumed, and then having tested it the inventor found that it was all right and that he was ready to dash away with his wonderful conveyance. Meanwhile, Barney had explained that he and his companion had reached Banole in safety, and that their delay was due to the fact that the foundry was not working, and they were obliged to have recourse to a native metal workshop, where the work was done at last, though very slowly. Returning, they had managed to pass through the lines of the enemy undetected.

Immediately the Electric Team was started. The route to Lahove was taken, and as the wonderful invention dashed away the jungle-men swarmed forth before it and tried to stop it, but in vain.

With exultant shouts the Americans left the enemy behind very quickly. But Mohammed soon foretold that a storm was coming.

Presently the signs of a rainfall became apparent to all the party.

The sultry atmosphere gradually became weighty and humid.

The brassy sky gradually became overcast until a canopy of storm clouds veiled the face of the burning, tropical sun.

The doctor looked somewhat troubled as he gazed upon the threatening sky.

"What do you fear? The storm that is coming?" asked Frank Reade, as he noted the good doctor's expression.

"Yes," replied Dr. Vaneyke, seriously. "You must know that at this season of the year in India tornadoes are of frequent occurrence."

"And are they very destructive?"

"Yes. In many instances forests have been laid low, bungalows and native dwellings shattered, and the country devastated for miles."

"You alarm me."

"And the wind is not all we have to fear."

"No?"

"No, indeed; the rain often comes down in torrents such as we know nothing of in America, flooding the country in a few moments and raising the river twenty or thirty feet in a single hour."

"We must be prepared for the tornado as well as possible, sahib. The doctor has said truly. The storms of India are to be dreaded. The heat of the jungle fire has disturbed the nice balance of the atmosphere, and we shall surely have a tempest," said Mohammed.

Frank immediately ordered every one inside the coach, and he descended himself.

The blinds were closed, and Frank controlled the movements of the Electric Team by means of the lower lever, while the small window we have alluded to enabled him to see ahead.

Suddenly a terrible darkness descended upon the scene, and the black tornado cloud blotted out the light of the sun utterly. A gust of wind, a flash of vivid lightning, a peal of thunder that seemed to rend the sky, and the tempest burst in all its fury.

## CHAPTER XX.

### ADRIPT.

THE rain came down in drenching sheets, and the tornado threatened to overturn the electric vehicle.

But it stood firm. The broad tires were not easily thrown from their balance. The rain beat upon the vehicle and the wind howled over it, but it was not destroyed.

The moment the tornado cloud produced darkness Frank Reade turned on the electric light.

At once a broad and brilliant bar of strange glowing white light was radiated from the great globe in front of the coach.

The darkness of the storm was penetrated, and the road ahead could be seen.

And so the Electric Team went on and on through the storm.

Occasional flashes of lightning made the surrounding country momentarily visible, and during one of these transient illuminations Mohammed, who had come to Frank's side and was looking through the small window in the front of the coach, said:

"We are approaching the great reservoir of Magaderes. It is a lake artificially made on high ground, and its water is used to irrigate the country hereabouts, and supply the town of Magaderes further on."

"Is the reservoir secure?" asked Frank.

"Oh, yes. It has stood the storms of years. But our road runs along the foot of 'reservoir hill,' and I shall feel a trifle more secure, sahib, when we are well by it."

"If this terrible storm should cause the reservoir to burst its walls, Mohammed, what would be the consequences? I think the whole country would be flooded. Am I not right?"

"Yes. Ah, the destruction would be terrible! The Magaderes reservoir is one of the largest. Miles of country in every direction would be inundated if it should burst."

"Well, the storm does not promise any abatement in violence as I can discover, and I think I shall venture to turn on a little more electricity in order to hasten our passing the reservoir," replied Frank.

"Do so by all means, sahib, if you can without too great danger to the machinery."

Frank made a connection with the second battery, and gradually permitted its power to pass along the network of wires to the machinery of the metallic horses.

Their speed was increased materially. But the drenching rain was converting the jungle into a bed of mud, and despite their wide tires the wheels of the electric vehicle sank deeply, and more power was required to keep them moving.

Not many moments after the young inventor had applied additional electric power another vivid flash of lightning came.

By its light Frank saw the country all around, and he observed that some parts of the open, marshy low lands were already converted into sheets of water.

He was alarmed to some degree also by seeing that all the domestic animals in sight were moving for the higher ground.

But the electric coach speeded on.

The tireless metal steeds felt not, heeded not the storm. The electric power was sufficient to overcome all the obstacles interposed by the elements in their warfare.

The road presently made a bend, and a wide bridge of heavy logs, spiked to stout stringers, was before the coach and team of the inventor.

Up the hillside, just beyond the bridge, the walls of the reservoir arose.

The electric light enabled Frank Reade to discover, as his glance was anxiously directed toward the reservoir, that small streams of water were trickling down the hill-side.

Frank feared that either the reservoir leaked or that the water had overflowed its wall.

In either case the peril of the Electric Team was great.

If the descending streams of water which Frank Reade had discovered came from the reservoir, it was certain that the walls of the reservoir were not secure.

The young American inventor shuddered as he thought that at any moment the great lake might burst its walls and come rushing down upon him and his comrades in a restless, overwhelming flood, like a modern deluge.

The Electric Team was speeding toward the bridge.

Five minutes, which were periods of suspense to Frank, though he did not impart the full extent of his fears to his comrades, passed.

The bridge was almost reached.

All at once a strange new sound was heard above the many voices of the storm.

It was a crash, but not the crash of thunder.

A rushing sound of many waters followed.

"The reservoir, sahib! The reservoir! On—on for our lives!" shrieked Mohammed.

"We are lost! The reservoir has given way!" said the young inventor in a voice of terror, with his eyes at the little window in the forward part of the coach.

The same moment the feet of the electric horses rattled upon the bridge.

Runee clung to Moreland; Barney was on his knees with Pomp beside him.

Dr. Vaneyke stood white and silent at Frank Reade's side, and Mohammed was behind them wringing his hands excitedly.

"Heaven——" began Frank, but his words were cut short.

There was a crash and a roar like the voice of old ocean lashed to fury, and the young inventor's voice was drowned.

The coach gave a side lurch and hurried every one in the direction in which it tipped.

All thought it was going over, but no. The coach righted almost instantly, and the next moment Frank uttered a cry of joy.

"What is it?" demanded the doctor, excitedly.

"We float!" cried Frank.

"Can it be?"

"Yes; the flood from the reservoir carried the bridge off its foundation bodily and our conveyance with it."

"And we are drifting away on the floating bridge?"

"Yes."

"Our escape is miraculous and I am grateful, though our search for my missing cousin will now be further delayed," said the doctor.

It was as Frank Reade said, amazing as the circumstance appeared.

The torrent from the reservoir, which had broken through its wall, had really swept the floor of the log bridge off its buttments without injuring it.

The electric outfit was now standing on the floating bridge, and it was at rest, for Frank had instantly turned off the electricity.

All around where the electric light cast its illumination was a seething sea of water.

The bridge was floating southward toward the lowland and a river which would ultimately carry away the water of the inundation.

Whither they were going or how their strange voyage would end Frank Reade and his comrades did not for the time trouble themselves to consider.

They were all too much rejoiced in the miraculous escape of the present to worry about future contingencies just yet.

And so they drifted onward.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### A PITFALL.

But the storm had now spent its fury and the darkness faded. Light flashed through the dissipated clouds, and the sun shone out upon the scene of the flood again.

Suddenly a cry of terror was heard by the inventor's party, and they discovered a man clinging to a floating tree.

The imperiled man was a native, and as the current of the flood brought his floating tree nearer the drifting bridge, Frank Reade and his comrades obtained quite a distinct view of the Hindoo's face.

The young inventor, with Mohammed, Pomp and Barney, had now alighted from the coach, and they were standing on the bridge, which had so strangely been converted into a flat-boat.

Mohammed scanned the face of the man in the

water intently. A look of recognition presently appeared upon Mohammed's face, and he said:

"I know that man."

"Who is he?" asked Frank Reade. He had procured a rope, and was about to cast it to the man who clung to the tree.

"One of Wolandah's adherents," replied Mohammed.

"Then he is your friend?"

"Yes. The poor fellow must be saved. See, he is well-nigh exhausted, and he has not strength enough to catch the rope," said Mohammed.

Frank had cast the rope as he had spoke, but the native had failed to secure it.

Mohammed began to discard his tunic.

He meant to go to his friend's rescue, but at that instant Barney caught sight of a strange, dark, elongated head, furnished with a double row of gleaming fangs, which was lifted above the water.

The creature was swimming straight toward the man who clung to the tree.

"Worra, begob, an' there's a shark!" yelled Barney.

"No, a crocodile! A man-eater!" said Frank.

"Yes, yes. But I must not see the monster devour my poor, helpless friend," said Mohammed.

Then he drew a long, heavy knife from his girdle and placed it in his teeth.

The next moment he plunged into the water and the spectators uttered cries of alarm.

"Sure and the crocodile will make a meal av Mister Moham," said Barney.

Indeed it seemed the adventure would end thus. The crocodile and Mohammed were both swimming for the man in the tree.

Suddenly, as the monster was almost upon his prey Mohammed disappeared under the surface.

"He's gone. An' widout a drop of good ould stuff in his stoumick, too, poor fellow," wailed Barney.

But not so. The succeeding moment Mohammed was seen again.

He arose beside the crocodile, and in an instant he threw himself astride his scaly body, and grasping his knife, buried it in one of the creature's little fiendish eyes as the great head swung toward him.

The aim of the East Indian was true, and his heavy-bladed knife went crashing into the brain of the man-eater.

It was a skillful death blow.

The monster sank and Mohammed reached the side of his friend and started to swim with him to the floating bridge.

But just then a "shoal" of crocodiles, if one may use the term, were discovered by the inventor's party.

A dozen crocodiles were bearing down upon Mohammed and his friend.

"Here's a chance for us to help Mohammed," cried Frank.

In a moment he gained the top of the coach, placed an explosive shell in the cannon, depressed the big gun until the sights fell on the group of crocodiles, and then discharged the missile of destruction.

The boom of the cannon was followed by the explosion of the shell, which struck right among the man-eaters.

The water was dashed up like a spout, and several of the crocodiles were blown to atoms.

"Whoop! Begob, it's the big gun is a daisy. Wid a pair av the same in me belt, bedad, I'd free ould Ireland before nixt fourteenth of Ireland," cried Barney enthusiastically.

"You've got no sense, Irish. How you kerry dem cannon? Bah! you done make me tired, man," said Pomp.

"Whist, naygur, yez are not expected til undherstan' the power av an Irish gentleman," retorted Barney.

Meanwhile the shell had frightened off the crocodiles that were not killed.

Mohammed reached the bridge in safety with his friend and was drawn on board.

The rescued native was insensible and Mohammed and the others set about the work of resuscitating him.

Barney produced his flask and presented it to Mohammed, saying:

"Bedad, an' I don't like to tempt a drinkin' man, but yez done so well wid the crocodile that yez are welcome. Take one little hoot, Moham, old chap, an' begob may it warm ye inside av yer shell, sure!"

Mohammed put the bottle from him.

"How many times will you persist in offering me drink?" he said in a tone of disgust.

Barney and Pomp exchanged grins.

"Oxouse me, Moham, old rocks! But bedad I forgot you had sworn off," replied Barney, readily.

Through the united efforts of Mohammed, Frank Reade and Dr. Vaneyke, who made the scientific

application of electricity serve as a revivifying medium, the strange native was soon revived.

As soon as he could speak he said to Mohammed:

"I come from Wolandah. I was sent to find the European magician who drives the horses of metal. The storms and the floods overtook me, but the good fates have brought me to those I sought."

"Yes, yes," replied Mohammed, "but tell me what message did Wolandah send?"

"That he is in danger. He is hemmed in by his foes. He bade me say to his European friends that he asked their aid, and that he had one with him who could give them some information about the lost European they seek."

"Let us go to Wolandah. We owe him a service, and then, too, if we do not save the man who can give us a clue to Richard Carlyle's whereabouts we may never find him," said the doctor.

"Right. But just now we must wait for the flood to subside before we can attempt to respond to Wolandah's call," said Frank.

"Who is the man who can give information of the missing European?" asked Mohammed of the native.

"Hydra, the spy, who has the gold medal."

"It is as I thought. As soon as the water falls and we can make the land we will hasten to the rescue of the rightful prince of the province of Jagpore—my friend, Wolandah," said Mohammed.

The day wore on. The flood gradually subsided, and when the succeeding night had passed and dawn had come again, the bridge was found to have drifted upon dry land.

No time was lost in getting under way.

The inventors journeyed until noon, and they failed to see a couple of stealthy spies, who had been sent by Tippoo Kahn to ascertain their fate, as the dusky villains glided away from their noor halting place.

An hour later and the Electric Team was again in motion. The rescued native was guiding it to Wolandah. But just at nightfall, as the route entered a jungle, the road under the Electric Team and coach gave way, and vehicle and horses sank down into a pit.

"Ha! We are caught in a trap! The stranglers missed the road, and we are in the pitfall!" cried Frank, and a chorus of fierce, exultant cries cut short his words.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### MINING THE PIT.

THE situation of the Electric Team and the inventor's party was one well calculated to strike terror to the stoutest heart.

No longer was the magical power of electricity available to carry them away from the yelling wild-men of the jungle.

Hemmed in by the walls of the pit into which the electric vehicle had been so suddenly precipitated, retreat was as wholly impossible as a continuance of the journey.

The Phansigars had planned the ambush with cunning forethought, and calculated the possible contingencies resulting from the success of the pitfall.

They had mined the road at a point where the highway was just beyond long rifle range of the adjacent jungle, which was in this neighborhood particularly dense and impenetrable.

Tippoo Kahn's scouts had brought him word of the approach of the Europeans who were carrying away the beautiful Nautch girl he had purchased from her mercenary master.

The Phansigar's band was deployed in the jungle guarding one portion of the way from a valley beyond.

The old jungle chief was acting in conjunction with another force of the rajah's which surrounded the opposite sides of the wall-bound valley.

Therein Wolandah, the intrepid young patriot and rightful heir to the throne of Jagpore, was besieged.

Wolandah had gathered about him a small band of brave and devoted adherents, which he meant to be the nucleus of a revolutionary army, with which to wrest the throne from the usurper.

Surprised in the small valley, and environed by an overwhelming force of the enemy, the young East Indian naturally enough bethought himself of sending a messenger to call Frank Reade and his wonderful invention to his assistance.

The Phansigars had discovered the messenger as he was threading the jungle with the stealth of the serpent, and they had set out to run him down, but he had eluded them, and then he was overtaken by the flood.

A moment after the Electric Team broke through the road and sank into the pit, which had been cunningly covered with slender bamboo stalks, over which a thin layer of earth like the rest of

the road, had been sprinkled, the messenger from Wolandah said to Mohammed:

"Just yonder, where the hills rise out of the jungle and beyond the barriers, Wolandah is surrounded by his foes."

As he spoke in the native tongue the East Indian pointed northward.

Mohammed translated what the messenger said for the benefit of the Europeans.

But without an instant's delay Frank Reade, as soon as he understood that he had fallen into a trap, began to devise means to extricate himself.

The yells of the Phansigars in the jungle were yet ringing in the young inventor's ears, and the dark forms of the jungle-men were visible at the confines of the thicket, though as yet they prudently kept out of rifle range, when Frank said:

"Barney, open the supply chest and get out half a dozen mine cartridges."

"Faith an' I will do that same, Masther Frank. But sure an' ye are afeather thinkin' av blowin' up the whole heathen country?" said Barney.

"No, but as we are caught like foxes in a pitfall, like those animals, we can only escape by digging our way out," said Frank.

The young American had quite regained his composure, and now he was as cool as possible in the face of the imminent danger.

"Is it possible, then, think you, Frank, that we can get the Electric Team out of the pit?" asked Dr. Vaneyke, in an anxious tone.

"Well, I think so, doctor. That is, if the East Indians do not charge us in overwhelming numbers. By the way, will you just ascend to the top of the coach and see if you cannot elevate the cannon on a level with the top of the pit, and if so, drop a few shells among the Phansigars at the edge of the timber. The rascals know they are out of rifle range, but it seems to me they have not calculated rightly if they think our big gun cannot carry a shot to them," said Frank, as he produced a couple of long iron drills, steel pointed, and well tempered.

"All right, I'll attend to the cannon," replied the good doctor.

The excavation into which the Electric Team had sunk was large enough to leave some space around the vehicle, and Frank, assisted by Pomp and Mohammed, set to work with the drills to make an opening in the bank ahead of the Electric Team.

It was the young inventor's purpose to drill the bank for the reception of the explosive mine cartridge. He hoped to blast away such a portion of the perpendicular wall as to form an inclined plain, up which the Electric Team might draw his coach to the firm earth beyond.

A hasty but none the less thorough examination of his electric conveyance and the metallic steeds had assured Frank that none of the machinery had been broken by the fall.

When the catastrophe occurred Runee, the beautiful fugitive, was naturally enough thrown into a state of great excitement and alarm; and when the fierce yells of the jungle-men reached her hearing, her terror and despair attained a climax.

The poor girl thought that cruel destiny had decreed that she should fall into the power of the men she dreaded again.

One cry of thrilling intonation escaped her lips, and then, white faced and trembling, she clung to the noble young American, Tom Moreland, as though upon him she placed all dependence to protect her.

And Moreland had murmured words of reassurance and hope, which were not an expression of his real sentiments.

But Frank Reade's cool and hopeful words and his evident determination were an assurance that gave Moreland courage, and when Frank directed the doctor to attend to the cannon the young artist sprang forward, saying:

"I will help you with the gun, doctor, and let us try to drive the stranglers back into the jungle before they gain sufficient courage to make a charge."

Then, while Frank and his assistants drilled away at the embankment, Moreland and the doctor, working in unison, succeeded in elevating the screw carriage of the cannon to its utmost height, and they were delighted to find that the muzzle of the great gun was thus finally lifted just above the level of the pit wall.

As the gun revolved on a pivot, and could, therefore, be readily turned in any direction, no difficulty was experienced in presenting it at the enemy.

The cannon was already loaded, and taking careful aim, the doctor discharged it.

A booming detonation ensued, and an explosive shell went like an arrow whizzing among the swarthy jungle-men.

Yells, groans, and howls of consternation made a pandemonium of dreadful sounds the succeeding instant, and the jungle-men plunged into the

thicket, bent upon getting beyond the range of the big gun.

But several of their number were left upon the ground in the "open," thus telling that the shell had done execution.

Barney had gotten out the blasting cartridges meanwhile, and they were inserted into the cavities which the drills soon formed in the wall of the pit.

Then Frank carefully arranged a wire, which he connected with the electric battery in the coach, and preparatory to the discharge of the blast all the party retreated behind the coach, where there was a space between the vehicle and the wall.

But now a dozen or more of the hostile East Indians were seen advancing from the jungle under cover of a movable barricade which consisted of a two-wheeled native cart covered with a closely woven mass of bamboo, which was in turn supplied with a heavy layer of jungle sod, so as to render it impervious to rifle bullet.

The cannon had not yet been reloaded, for it chanced that the ammunition for the large gun was all in the supply-chests.

Sheltered by their novel breastworks on wheels, the enemy came on toward the pit very swiftly.

There was no time now to get out more ammunition and reload the cannon before the Phansigars would be upon the inventor's party, it seemed.

"Begob, an' it's an illigant bit av a hand til handy shindy. A ruction after me own heart, as we will be afeather havin' now in faith!" said Barney, brandishing his shillalah.

"No," said Frank Reade, grimly. "The wretches are charging us from the front. There's luck for us in that, as you shall see."

As he spoke, Frank leaped into the coach and seized the lever controlling the electric battery.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

##### THE CAMP OF WOLANDAH.

"Be the powers, an' it's mesel' as twigs yerscane, Masther Frank! Orrah! But it's the illigant head stuffed wid gilt-edged brains yez have on your shoulders, sure!" exclaimed Barney.

Then a suspenseful silence fell upon the imperiled band, and they looked into each other's faces inquiringly, as though each sought to read the other's opinion of the plan which they all comprehended was in Frank Reade's mind.

Runee stood at Tom Moreland's side, and he felt her slender, graceful form shiver as the moments went by.

And the Phansigars continued their swift advance behind their movable barrier.

The swarthy jungle-men were completely sheltered, and they thought, undoubtedly, that they would now get near enough to engage the Europeans in a hand to hand encounter.

Frank Reade watched the advance of the foe carefully. He seemed to be making a calculation, and all at once, as the strange movable breastworks loomed up close ahead of the pit, the young inventor depressed the magic lever which he held in his hand.

By this act a stream of electricity was discharged along the wire connecting with the mine cartridges.

The succeeding instant they were almost simultaneously exploded.

The result was terrific, terrible and startling. The earth was hurled high into the air under the Phansigars' movable shelter, for they were right over the bank which the Europeans had mined when Frank discharged the blast, nicely timing the application of the electricity so as to attain this result.

It was as though an underground volcano had suddenly belched forth its pent up volume of explosive gas.

The Phansigars' shelter was demolished and its fragments were strewn about, mingled with the bodies of the men who had been concealed behind it.

The few who escaped the explosion fled as though pursued by the demon of destruction, and their shouts of terror rang out weird and appalling.

But more than the rout and destruction of the enemy had been accomplished by the timely explosion.

The perpendicular wall was demolished, and a jagged slanting opening to the surface was made.

"Whoop! It's brains and janus agin brute force as wins the foight! Frank Reade and Barney O'Shea foriver!" shouted Barney.

"Dat's so, Irish, you done tole de truff fo' once. Gollie! now we'll git to work wid de spades an' level down dat mined out hole, an' den out comes de 'lectric Team an' we uns an on deck again wid all sail set!" cried Pomp, delightedly.

"Yes. To work! To work with a will!" cried Frank.

Then all hands set to work with spades and

commenced the task of sloping the blown-up bank in such a manner as to form a way of ascent for the Electric Team.

But Barney paused to produce his flask and take a pull at it. Then he extended it to Mohammed, saying:

"It's mesel' as knows yer wakeness. It's not the loikes av mesel' as would make bould to timpt a man who is thyrin' til swear off; but, be gob, it's a wee taste ye shall have, Moham, ould by, to celebrate the occasion, be me sowl!"

But Mohammed only pushed the bottle from him without saying a word this time, and the jolly Irishman and Pomp had a laugh.

"Mistah Moham done broke dat Irisher's head one ob dose days, 'uf he done keep shovin' dat bottle under his nose, I 'spects," muttered Pomp.

"Sure an' yez say that to put Moham up to a foight. Be gob, an' do yez mane to put a mon up to foight Barney O'Shea? Faith, nagur, it's yersel' as will have the first foight, ye black baboon, yez!" cried Barney.

He made a pass at Pomp as he spoke, but the agile darky neatly dodged the blow and snatched the bottle, which Barney still held in his left hand.

The next moment the two ridiculous fellows were clinched and tumbling about in the dirt, rolling over and over, struggling for the possession of the precious bottle.

Frank was angry, and he cuffed both the belligerent fellows' ears right and left smartly, and soon brought them to their senses.

"You deserve to fall into the hands of the enemy both of you. Now to work, or I'll ropes-end you both, yuz unreasonable good-for-nothing rascals," said Frank.

And Neither Pomp or Barney dared say a word when their young master took that tone.

They seized their spades and set to work with a will.

Soon the bank was neatly sloped up to the road bed.

Then the party boarded the electric coach again, and Frank sent the electric motive power to the machinery of the metallic team, and the steed started.

The ascent out of the pit was accomplished in safety, and once more the Electric Team was ready to proceed.

The road ran through the hills into the valley, where Wolandah was besieged. The native who had come as the young prince's messenger said that the enemy had built a barricade at the entrance of the valley, and proceeding swiftly, the Electric Team soon brought our friends in sight of a log barrier.

"We'll shell the barricade, and then demolish it!" cried Frank.

Then he had a good supply of ammunition brought up to the roof, and at once opened fire on the barricade.

The shells exploded behind it, and sent the enemy away in confusion.

Then fire-balls were discharged instead of shells, and the dry logs of which the barricade was made were soon in flames.

When the conflagration had well-nigh destroyed the barrier Frank gave orders to have the great steel swords, which he had brought with him for the purpose, screwed upon the wheels at the hubs.

This was done and then an advance was made. The metal horses and fire-proof vehicle charged straight upon the smoldering flames of the burning barricade and safely passed it.

A moment, and the young American's wonderful invention was in the hill-locked valley.

But then a hundred of the adherents of Tippoo Kahn and the false rajah of Jagpore leaped up from their places of concealment among the adjacent rocks and charged desperately upon the electric coach.

Forth from every loop-hole a volley of shots was discharged by Frank and his party, all of whom were now in the interior of the bullet-proof coach.

And the Electric Team was kept going at full speed toward a fortified camp which Wolandah's messenger said was the stronghold of his master.

The great swords projecting from the hubs of the wheels now did execution.

The huge blades swept everything before them, and the enemy soon found that they could not attempt to board the wonderful coach without being mown down by the great swords like the grass before the blade of a reaper.

The Phansigars saw the electric vehicle sweep onward triumphantly toward the camp of Wolandah, and they were furious at their inability to overtake it.

They knew that the Europeans with their wonderful invention would be of invaluable assistance to Wolandah, and they began to feel that thus reinforced the young prince might even yet get out of the valley where they had hemmed him in, and where they meant he should perish.

The Electric Team reached Wolandah's camp,

and Frank Reade and his friends were welcomed gladly.

The good doctor almost immediately asked to see Hydra, the spy, who had in his possession the gold medal which had belonged to the lost explorer, Richard Carlyle.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### FRANK READE'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

WHILE Frank Reade and the others consulted with Wolandah as to the best means of securing the escape from the valley of the young prince and his little band of followers, a tall, intelligent-looking East Indian of middle age presented himself before the party.

With a respectful salaam the native said in very good English:

"I am called Hydra, and I am the man who has news to give you of the European, whom my prince tells me you are going to the Afghan's land to find, sahibs."

The East Indian, having thus introduced himself, drew from his bosom a medal of gold, and as soon as he saw it good Dr. Vaneyke exclaimed:

"Ah, we have not been deceived. That is the medal which the International Geographical and Exploring Association bestowed upon my cousin, Richard."

"Now, my good fellow, tell me precisely all you can about the man to whom that medal belonged," said the doctor further.

"Yes, sahib. You must know that one Ameer Selim, an Afghan sultan, gave me the gold medal for a reward, I had rendered him a service. Selim told me that the medal had been purchased by him of an Afghan chief, one Balkar, the leader of the fierce mountain tribe of the Hindoo-Coosh range, and the Ameer, or Sultan, also stated that Balkar had taken the medal from a *white man who was his slave*. So, sahib, I think you will find your friend among the tribe of the Afghan mountains. But it is a land of peril. The Afghans are fierce and warlike, jealous of Europeans, and ready to take their lives. And Balkar, the mountain Ameer, is one of the most lawless of all the petty chiefs in Afghanistan. I would make bold, sahib, to advise you not to venture among the wild tribes of Central Asia. No European has ever penetrated the great Hindoo-Coosh mountain passes, and it will be death for you to attempt to do so. And now let me give you the golden medal which was your friend's."

The East Indian thus concluding, handed the medal to the doctor, who received it, and thanking the honest fellow, placed several roupies in his bronzed palm.

Despite the alarming report to which they had listened, the inventor's party were not in the least discouraged.

"We count upon our electric conveyance and the many scientific appliances we carry, to enable us to go where white men have never preceded us," said Frank Reade.

Then, while a close watch was kept, in order to guard against a surprise by the enemy, Frank and the good doctor were taken aside by Wolandah and Mohammed.

The latter also signaled to Moreland, and the young artist left the side of the beautiful dancing girl and joined the group.

"Wolandah and I have decided that it is best that we should reveal to you something of the great treasure secret of the Parsees, which Tipoo Kahn seeks to penetrate," said Mohammed.

"Yes," assented Wolandah.

"The story of the hidden gold may be soon told. At the time of the mutiny or Sepoy rebellion when the native troops revolted, and led by Nana-Sahib sought to exterminate the English, the whole of India was in a state of turmoil and disturbance. Life and property were not safe anywhere. Lawless bands, like the followers of Tipoo Kahn, plundered friends and foes, and the rich were despoiled."

"At that time the ancestors of Wolandah and myself—who are related—though we as yet conceal the fact—possessed great wealth in gold and diamonds."

"Fearing robbery, one of my ancestors, accompanied by a band of faithful followers, fled to Afghanistan when the mutiny broke out, and there secretly buried the treasure."

"Only my ancestor whom I have mentioned and an old servant shared the secret of the *exact place* where the vast wealth of a long line of Parsee traders was buried."

"That ancestor made a map of the spot, and returning to India burned it, after having first, with his own hand, tattooed a copy of the treasure map upon my own breast."

"The map was duly explained to me, and in less than a week the families from which Wolandah and myself sprang were massacred by a band of Phansigars in the pay of the wretch who is now the Rajah of Jagpore."

"Thus perished all the heirs to the Parsees' gold, save Wolandah and myself."

"And in some way Tipoo Kahn discovered that I held the secret of the vast treasure, and he knows, too, that the map without which a search for the hidden wealth would be entirely useless is tattooed upon my breast."

"Now you can understand why the jungle chief is so anxious to make me a captive."

"Yes. The motive is plain," assented Frank Reade, as Mohammed paused.

"And," said Wolandah, "Mohammed and I have revealed the story of the hidden gold to you for a purpose. We wish to recover the wealth that has so long been buried, and we would make you a proposition."

"Ah. Do you want our assistance to get at the treasure?" asked Frank.

"Yes, sahib. The treasure is hidden in the very mountain range of Afghanistan to which you are going in search of your lost friend," responded Wolandah.

"And I am going with you, so you will have a treasure map at hand," said Mohammed, smiling.

"But we do not ask you, respected sahib, to do us this great service for nothing," Wolandah interpolated, quickly.

"No, no. Listen," he went on, as Mohammed signaled him to say more.

"We will share the vast treasure with you if you will bring it safely back to us here in India."

"Yes," added Mohammed, "and you shall set your own reward. Of the gold and diamonds, you shall take such a share as you think is right and give us the rest. Surely, sahib, that will be fair."

"More than fair," said Frank Reade.

Then to the doctor and Moreland:

"What say you, my comrades? Shall we not agree to help our friends recover their inheritance? Without our aid they can never hope to carry the great treasure safely beyond the confines of Afghanistan."

"I am in favor of helping to get the treasure," replied Moreland, readily.

"And I—provided the task is not allowed to interfere in any way with the original purpose of our journey—the rescue of my cousin, Richard Carlyle," said the doctor, rather hesitatingly.

"Oh, that is understood certainly," said Frank.

"Then let us shake hands upon the bargain according to the custom of Europeans," said Wolandah, smiling.

"Agreed," assented Frank, and the ceremony was performed.

"Now about my plan of escape," said Wolandah.

"After nightfall my men will be ready and covered by the Electric Team, which will lead, if you assent, sahib, we will make a rush through the pass. Once out of the valley, I know hiding-places where I shall be safe until the revolt I am planning against the usurper is ripe."

"It shall be as you say," assented Frank.

Wolandah's plan was carried out, and he was led out of the valley in safety. Then the inventor's party pressed on.

The night darkened rapidly, and suddenly, as the electric vehicle was passing along a road where the wide-spreading branches almost interlaced above it, and the metallic horses were advancing swiftly, as a terrible cry of alarm, uttered by Frank Reade, burst upon the silence of the night.

Frank was alone upon the top of the electric vehicle at this time, and at once the doctor, followed by all save Runee, ascended to the roof to ascertain the cause of Frank's alarming cry.

What, however, was the consternation of all upon gaining the roof to find that Frank Reade was no longer on the electric coach. An electric light was flashed backward over the road, but no trace of Frank could be found.

A further investigation confronted the party with a startling mystery, and it seemed that they could never solve it.

#### CHAPTER XXV.

##### THE FALSE BRAHMIN.

EACH passing moment increased the alarm of the young American inventor's comrades on his account.

"What had become of Frank Reade? Where was he now, and what was the secret of his disappearance from the electric coach under such surprising circumstances?"

Such were the questions which presented themselves to the minds of Frank's friends. But they were at all loss to explain the mystery.

"If Frank fell or was hurled from the coach, as he possibly may have been by violent contact with the overhanging branches of the trees, it would seem that we must find his body, even though he was stunned and insensible," said Dr. Vaneyke.

Then he procured a lantern, and accompanied by the others he began a close search along the road which had just been traversed.

Since they had all distinctly heard Frank Reade

cry they were assured that he must have been on the coach when he uttered the shriek, and as the doctor had reached the top of the electric vehicle, reversed the lever and thus stopped the coach quickly, it certainly could not have advanced more than a few yards after the inventor's voice was heard.

Now Frank's comrades went back along the road for at least a hundred yards. The lantern was held close to the road-bed, and every foot of the distance was inspected critically.

The searching party anticipated that surely they must discover some track or imprint in the soft soil of the highway which would serve to give them a clew to the night's mystery.

But in this they were disappointed. Not a track, not a sign was discovered in the road to tell what had befallen Frank.

And the young inventor's friends finally paused, and looked into each other's faces in blank amazement.

The mystery had become more startling than at first. But all felt that some dire calamity had befallen the great inventor, and the hero of so many adventurous journeys in all parts of the world.

"Be gob!" suddenly exclaimed Barney, who had been scratching his head for some time as though seeking to dig out an idea, "the trees overhead could almost reach the masthead, an' faith will yez be after tellin' me why some dirty blackguard av a jungle nagur could not have rached the two arrums av him down from the limbs an' whisked Masther Frank up intil the trees in the wink av an eye?"

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke, "there may be truth in your suggestion, Barney. Why did the thought not occur to us sooner? We have lost valuable time if Barney has hit upon the truth, and given Frank's possible captors plenty of time to make off with him."

"True. But now we must seek to make up for the moments we have wasted," said Moreland.

"Yes; we will search for a trail among the trees bordering the pathway on either side," assented the doctor.

Swiftly the border of the jungle on both sides of the road was searched.

But the result was still disappointing, and the mystery yet unsolved.

Not a single foot-print either of man or beast was discovered, although the earth under the trees was nude of vegetation, and it must have retained any impression.

The searching party next thought of the tree-tops. The foliage of the tall teaks was luxuriant and dense. That among the thickly interlaced branches hiding-places might be found was evident.

One after another the trees nearest the road were climbed by Pomp and Barney, who were active in the work, and quite solemn and sad, as they experienced the greatest solicitude on account of their young master.

But in the trees no discovery was made, and at length the party gave up the search for the time, and returning to the electric coach they held a consultation.

Finally, since Mohammed assured them that they could soon reach Lahore, it was decided that the party should proceed to that city, place Runee, the dancing-girl, in the care of the English resident, and then organize a large searching-party, composed of native hunters, who were familiar with the country, and make a thorough hunt for Frank, until every jungle and cover for miles around had been thoroughly inspected.

As soon as this plan, to which there was no dissenting voice, had been decided upon, the Electric Team was started forward by the doctor, and saddened and silent the young inventor's comrades proceeded on their way.

They reached the city of Lahore in safety, and Moreland at once escorted Runee to the palace of the English resident, Sir George Penton.

The resident proved to be a genial gentleman, well advanced in years, and he received Runee very kindly, and gave her in care of his wife, a lady who yet retained much of the exceeding beauty of her youth, though like her husband, she was past the meridian of life's day.

Moreland told Sir George that Runee was his betrothed, and implored the resident to guard the young girl against the machinations of her enemies, which he feared might reach even to the city of Lahore.

Sir George assured the young American that Runee should be well guarded, and he said, with feeling:

"The beautiful dancing girl saved my life, and my greatest care shall be that no harm shall befall her."

With this assurance Moreland was satisfied, and he withdrew from the residency confident of Runee's safety.

Rejoining his friends, the young artist found that Mohammed and the doctor were already negotiat-

ing with men to compose the band to accompany them in a further search for Frank Reade.

As the Americans had plenty of money, and liberal terms were offered, they had no difficulty in securing the services of all the men they wanted.

That day the party started on their quest.

The electric conveyance was put in motion, and the doctor acted as engineer and ran the wonder along the road, while the hunting party spread out over the surrounding country and advanced in the direction taken by the coach.

But Mohammed did not accompany the searching party. In Lahore, after holding a private consultation with the doctor and Moreland, the East Indian disappeared.

An hour later a pilgrim clothed in rags, carrying a crooked staff in his hand, and an educated monkey, such as the wandering fakirs of India train to perform most surprising feats, might have been seen leaving Lahore.

No one would have recognized Mohammed in the hideous old fakir, and yet he was Mohammed cleverly disguised.

The East Indian had the theory in his mind that Frank Reade had fallen into the clutches of the jungle-men.

He had assured Moreland and the doctor that he believed he could find Frank more surely in disguise than all the hunters who made an open search.

So the Americans had consented that Mohammed should go forth and seek for Frank in his own way, adopting his own ruses and stratagems.

Mohammed proceeded in the direction whence the inventor's party had come.

Meanwhile, that same evening, after the departure of all the hunting party and the Americans, Runee was taking the air in the garden of the residence after the heat of the sultry day.

The young girl was alone, but she felt no fear, for the wall was high all around the garden, and the gate of palings through which she could see a shadowy vista of street beyond, was secured on the interior side.

Suddenly, as she listened to the musical splash of the fountain and the voices of the doves cooing in the trees, another sound came to Runee's ears, and she glanced quickly toward the gate, only to draw back with a surprised and dazed but not frightened look in her eyes.

Looking in at her through the palings of the gate Runee beheld a man clothed in the flowing robes of a Brahmin or priest. His hair and beard were long and white as snow; his age was probably three score and ten at least, and his eyes seemed to glow with the light of recognition as he looked upon Runee.

And as for the girl she seemed to be suddenly transported back to the days of her early childhood, the recollection of which was like a half forgotten dream. But she knew that the white-haired old Brahmin, who was associated in her mind with the memory of the beautiful face which she believed to have been her mother's, now stood before her at the gate.

"My child, Runee. Little flower! Have you forgotten me? Have you forgotten your old father! Oh, child, say not so, or you will break this old heart. For years and years I wondered everywhere in search of my lost child and at last, at last I have found you!" said the aged Brahmin.

His voice was tremulous and he spoke with thrilling pathos.

As he paused he thrust his arms between the bars of the gate and extended them toward Runee with a look of unutterable yearning in his aged eyes, and yet this old priest was an impostor, a villainous tool sent by Tippoo Kahn to decoy Runee away. But all his life the Brahmin had lived by trickery and imposture. It was his trade and he had become a proficient actor, and Runee believed he was her father, and springing to the gate with a glad cry she gave him both her hands.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE VILLAGE OF "THE TREE-DWELLERS."

The old Brahmins' eyes flashed with an exultant gleam, as he noted the impression which he had made upon Runee.

The girl did not see the quick light that leaped into the small snaky eyes of the native priest. Had she done so, perhaps a suspicion which would have defeated the Brahmin's purpose might have crossed her mind.

The old priest did not give the girl time to reflect. He began speaking again in an impassioned tone as soon as he grasped her hand, and his words were well calculated to move Runee.

"Yes, my child, I am your father," the Brahmin continued. "Listen, and I will tell you all. During the 'Sepoy rebellion' the Europeans murdered your mother, and your only brother was blown from the cannon's mouth in the public square at Calcutta. Who think you gave the order for your brother's murder? It was murder, for he was in-

nocent, and he had taken no part in the mutiny."

"I do not know, father," said Runee.

The Brahmin glanced significantly at the palace of the resident, an evil look crossed his face, and he lifted one shriveled hand, and pointing at the resident's abode, hissed:

"The accursed European who dwells there gave the order for your brother's death!"

Runee shuddered, and she looked horrified. "And yet you are under the protection of your brother's murderer. Oh, Runee, you cannot, will not, remain here. Come, come, my child, come with your poor old father. Come, and you shall be happy with your own people. I have wealth. It is all for you. Open the gate, my child, and let us leave this accursed European's dwelling in company, after all the long years of our severance."

The eloquence and emotion of the old Brahmin carried the young girl away. She, for the moment, forgot everything, and thought only of her supposed father and his wrongs.

Impulsively she opened the gate, and the Brahmin drew her through it, while his evil eyes glowed again like coals of fire.

"Come, we will away. If the resident sees us he will make us both captives. Come to our jungle home," said the Brahmin.

"The jungle! No, no! I cannot go there. The enemies I dread are there," cried Runee.

And then she thought of Moreland. Suddenly she realized she was leaving the place where she had promised her lover he should find her when he returned.

Half inarticulately the name of the young artist fell from her lips.

"I cannot go without leaving some word for my promised husband," she said.

"What!" exclaimed the Brahmin, in startled tones.

Then he added quickly, while he cast an anxious glance about, where the shadows were swiftly deepening, and closing in the night.

"You do not love a European? one of the race who has brought our people naught but misery?"

"I do, I do!"

"This is folly. It must not be."

"He is good and noble."

"But he has deceived you."

"No, no, that cannot be."

"It is true. Oh, child, I would spare you the sorrow of the knowledge, but it is best that you should know all."

Runee grasped the impostor's arm. All her soul spoke in her searching eyes, as she scanned his face and she cried:

"Tell me what you mean!"

"The European has told you you should be his wife, has he not?" asked the Brahmin coolly.

"Yes," gasped Runee, panting with excitement.

"He can never make you his wife, because a European lady, who is now his bride, awaits the return of Moreland, the European, in Calcutta, where he left her."

The words fell from the lips of the old Brahmin as though it cost him an effort to utter them, and there was an accent of pity in his tones.

But in thus accusing Moreland of falsehood and base treachery the Brahmin had overreached himself.

Runee could not believe this thing of Moreland. Her heart told her it was false, and that the young American was true as steel.

All at once an awakening came upon the girl. She thought of Tippoo Kahn's cunning, and the idea finally dawned upon her mind that she was acting rashly in leaving the residency with the Brahmin.

Runee resolved that she would not go away with the man who claimed to be her father until she had consulted with Moreland.

So she said:

"No, no, I cannot doubt the brave man who pledged me his love, I will not leave the residency until I have seen him."

Runee started to leave the old Brahmin, and she meant to go back into the garden, but suddenly the old jungle-man sprang forward and threw a shawl, which he wore over his shoulders, about her neck. The next instant he twisted it so tightly that the poor girl could not utter a sound. A low signal call fell from the Brahmin's lips, and out of the shadows darted two almost naked Phansigars, and the succeeding moment Runee was being borne swiftly away.

It seemed that the old Brahmin's ruse which he and Tippoo Kahn had plotted was bound to succeed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile we must follow Mohammed.

He entered a jungle path at no great distance from the city of Lahore.

After several miles of the jungle had been traversed Mohammed came to a singular village. A grove of great banyan trees with wide branches was before him, and in the branches of those trees were a number of strange, conical huts of bamboo

and reeds, looking very much like a number of great beehives set in the trees.

Mohammed had reached a village of the singular "tree dwellers of India," and he knew the occupants of those elevated huts were Phansigars in league with Tippoo Kahn.

Mohammed as a wandering fakir was welcomed by "the tree dwellers," and he proceeded to give an exhibition with his educated monkey.

The jungle men were well pleased, and presently while Mohammed was partaking of food which they gave him, a man came down out of one of the huts who had a silk handkerchief, which Mohammed instantly recognized as the property of Frank Reade, bound about his head as a turban.

The honest East Indian's heart leaped, and he resolved to stay at the village of "the tree dwellers" until he found out whether, as he half suspected might be the case, the young inventor was a prisoner there or not.

So the day wore on. Night came, and Mohammed meant to explore the huts in the trees when all the inmates slept.

Suddenly he was startled by an arrival.

He saw Runee brought to the village by the old Brahmin and two comrades.

"Who is this stranger?" demanded the Brahmin, suspiciously, when he saw Mohammed.

"Only a poor fakir," responded Mohammed, with a salaam, and the Brahmin passed on with his captive, and ascended to one of the huts in the trees.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### BARNEY AND POMP ON HAND.

MEANWHILE the search for Frank Reade, which was being made by Dr. Vaneyke and his party, was steadily pursued. The Electric Team kept to the road, and the searchers on foot beat the surrounding country.

When night came no trace of the young inventor had been discovered. Finally, when it was too dark to continue the search, the doctor rang the electric bell and called in all the hunters.

The entire band quickly assembled about the electric vehicle. Then they set out to return to Lahore.

As may be supposed, the young inventor's friends were very much discouraged, but Barney said:

"Be the harp av Tara, it's mesel' as will never lave this hathen land until I hev found Masther Frank."

"An' dis gemman ob color votes dat same ticket," said Pomp, impulsively.

"Begob, it's a jewel yez are, Pomp! Put yer fist there!" cried Barney, extending his hand, and the two "shook" on the agreement warmly. "Faith an' Pomp an' mesel kin lick all the yellor nagurs in Injia if the blackguards 'ud stand up in fair foight! An' now, doctor, dear, will yez do me a bit av a favor?" continued Barney.

"Yes," replied Dr. Vaneyke.

"Well, ye see we hev our suits av mail on. Now what I am afther axin av yez is, that ye charge me own an' Pomp's suits av mail wid electricity—charge the whole armor, gloves, steel helmets an' all, so, begob, we'll shock everything we touch," said Barney.

"Well, all right. But what do you mean to do?" asked the doctor.

"We mane to go on a bit av a scout. As we was a-comin' in answer to the bell—sure an' we heard it a long way—we diskivered a bit av a path in the jungle, an' we saw traeks av the min we think hev carried off Masther Frank. An' begob, now we mane to find out where the path leads to."

"All right. I'll charge your armors with electricity at once and we will wait here for you," said the doctor.

"Dat am all right," replied Pomp.

Barney also assented.

Then the doctor attached a wire to the armor of each of Frank Reade's two devoted followers, and having made a connection with the electric battery in the coach, he turned on the magic current and quickly charged the armor worn by Pomp and Barney so full of electricity, that he said:

"Now any one you come in contact with will receive a terrible shock, and there is enough electricity in your two armors to impart a dozen shocks in succession to as many different persons."

"Dat's de ticket. We'll shock de hull bake-shop if we done run on to any ob dem no account yellor trash!" said Pomp.

"Faith, an' we will do that same thin! Begob! an' it's a dance as we will make the blackguards dance, the loike av which they never danced. Be the harp av Tara, may we foind the yellor nagurs an' Masther Frank, too, the saints presarve him," said Barney.

He and Pomp left the electric vehicle as soon as

their armors had been charged sufficiently to suit them.

They made their way swiftly to the jungle path upon which they had stumbled while hastening to the electric coach, as we have seen.

The two brave fellows began to thread the narrow footpath, for it was nothing more, and ere long they came in sight of the very village of "the tree dwellers," where Mohammed yet remained, and where the faithful East Indian knew Runee was a captive, and half suspected Frank Reade was also a prisoner.

Under the moonlight the two brave fellows plainly discerned the huts in the trees.

"Be gob, we have struck a queer place! Look at it now. Faith an' it's here men live in nests in the trees loike birruds, be dad, an' it's blackbirds they are," said Barney, in a whisper.

He and his companion crouched down and waited. They could see the jungle natives cooking the evening meal over several fires at the foot of the great trees in which they dwelt, and they saw Mohammed but never suspected who he was.

The night wore on, and finally the natives and Mohammed retired to the strange huts in the trees.

When all was silent Runee, who was alone in one of the "tree-huts," guarded by a native who crouched outside the door, was startled by a sound on the roof. A moment and a *white hand* was thrust down through the opening and then Runee saw the face of Frank Reade peering down at her.

"Can you not reach the roof? Come, make the attempt to reach the opening I have made in the thatch and I will try to save you," Frank Reade whispered.

The young inventor was on hand to save the imprisoned maiden, and how he disappeared from the electric coach, and his subsequent adventures will presently be explained and related.

Runee had yielded to despair, but at the sound of Frank Reade's whispered words she sprang up hopefully, climbed upon a bench and managed to reach the hole in the roof, and Frank assisted her through it.

Then they started to descend the tree. Frank reached the ground first and Runee followed, dropping into Frank's arms from the lowest limb.

The escaping couple were about to steal away when the old Brahmin who had captured Runee leaped up from the foot of the tree, where he had been asleep, and uttered a wild alarm.

Like a swarm of bees, the jungle men came dropping down from the trees, and as Frank and Runee started to run, hand in hand, the old Brahmin and several others threw themselves upon them.

Frank must have been overpowered, but suddenly the old fakir, whom we know to be Mohammed, fell upon the astounded assailants of the young inventor, dealing terrible blows with a short native sword.

Frank sprang away, followed by Runee and the old fakir. But they were pursued, and it seemed they were about to be overtaken, when suddenly two strange-looking men, clothed from head to foot in armor, sprang up out of the tall jungle grass, between Frank Reade, Runee, the fakir and their foes.

"Praise the saints! It's the young master himself! Begob, he's alive an' well, an' now, Pomp, it's a bit av a ruction like ould times we'll be afther havin'. Heave ahead, an' we'll bate the heads av the spalpeens! Whoop! Erin-go-bragh! Lether go, Gallagher!" yelled Barney, and he pranced forward right among the howling tree-men, dealing blows right and left with his steel gauntlets.

Pomp was at Barney's side, and he laid about him in as lively a manner as did the Irishman.

Every native who came in contact with the two men in armor received terrible electric shocks, and in a very few moments the two heroes had the field of battle to themselves.

The natives were either prostrated by the electricity, or they had fled.

Then Barney and Pomp joined hands and executed a sort of impromptu war-dance, which was a mixture of the steps of an Irish reel and a plantation breakdown.

Frank and his two companions had halted at a distance of a few yards, and the young inventor roared with laughter. He was so happy over his escape that he could laugh at anything.

Pomp and Barney presently almost overwhelmed their young master with their congratulations. Then suddenly Mohammed revealed himself and all were very much surprised, but Barney said gravely as he shook the East Indian's hand.

"Begob, this is an occasion which the loikes av yersel' Moham, ould hoss, cannot pass over wid a dry throat, an' so, begob, take a pull til the health av Masther Frank and the lady."

Thus speaking, Barney presented his flask.

"No!" thundered Mohammed, fiercely.

"Oh!" imitated Barney, and Pomp roared.

The reunited friends hastened back to where Pomp and Barney had left the coach, but the coach was no longer there.

What could it mean?

The inventor and his friends were surprised, and they stood in the jungle road staring at each other blankly.

Suddenly Pomp shouted:

"To kiver! Dar comes de inemy!"

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### BARNEY IS ANXIOUS TO FIGHT A CHAMPION.

The alarming cry uttered by Pomp when Frank Reade and his comrades reached the highway, where the darky had left the electric coach, was occasioned by the discovery of several dark forms stealing toward them along the road.

The advancing men kept well in the shadow of the dense foliage of the jungle which bounded the pathway on either side.

The indistinct light of the moon did not make the stealthily-moving men plainly visible, but Pomp thought they were Phansigars, and therefore enemies.

Frank Reade was about to recoil, and Runee had turned back into the shelter whence the party had just emerged, when Barney, whose keen sight had enabled him to make the discovery, exclaimed hastily:

"Hold on! Be the powers, but the min forninst us are some av the docthur's party."

"The men who were engaged to search for me?" asked Frank.

"Yis, be gob."

"Then we'll show ourselves."

"Faith, an' we will."

"And we shall find out what has become of the electric coach," said Frank, in a voice which evinced his intense solicitude for the safety of his pet invention.

"Begob, an' it's always me luck to be disappointed," growled Barney as the party again advanced, while Runee kept close to the side of the young inventor, as though she was not fully convinced yet that there was no danger to be anticipated from the men they were going to meet.

"What do you mean?" questioned Frank. "Why are you disappointed now? Surely it cannot be because you see the men who are approaching are friends?"

"Yis, begob, that's the cause av me sorrow. Excuse me tears. Bad luck til the eyes av thim, but they have spoilt me anticipations. It's a ruction sure I had set me heart on whin the blackguards turned out to be friends."

"You may be thankful they are not enemies," replied Frank.

"Be the harp av Tara but it's wan good fair stand up foight I'm pinin' fur. Since the bit av a shindy wid the yellor nagurs, whin the lady, God bless the putty face av her, cut the cords the spalpeens hed tied me wid at the temple, divil a wan av me has had a bit av diversion."

Barney sighed and wiped his eyes in mock grief. "You're better stan' up afore de East Indian champion ob Lahore if youse want to fight somebody. Gollie! da say dat feller am de champion boxer an' fighter ob Inje," said Pomp.

"Begob, Pomp, an' yez are a jewel in ebony. Faith, an' it's an illigant bit av consolation yez hev given me. Sure, an' it's a foight I'll have wid the nagur champion whin we git back to Lahore. An' would yez stand me second, Pomp?"

"Gollie! You bet yer last summer socks, or any odder strong tings, dat I'se right on han' when dar am any standin' second business goin' on. Dat's my strong holt. Yes, sah, standin' second am a heap mo' fun dan standin' *first*. I'se been dar. I speaks accordin' to 'sperience," replied Pomp.

"Arrah! I wonder, now, me jewel, if iver the nagurs in this heathen country was afther seein' a fair, stand-up prize-foight?"

"Dat's what dat big native am. He am a prize-fighter, an' he kin lick all de native niggers an' de Britishers what has stood up to him."

"Whoop! Begob, the blood in me veins begins to circulate like ould toimes wance more. The champion nagur may bate all the oder nagurs, and the English, bad luck to their red coats—but be the great Saint Patrick's bell, he can't bate an Irishman!"

"Doan' yer be too sure about dat."

"What! Begob, Pomp, if yez want to insult me wance yez hev' only to say, begorra, that a native nagur can bate a sprig av a lad from ould Ireland."

"Dat's all right. Keep yer close on. You'se alers firin' up 'bout nuffin."

"What! Are you rascals seriously considering the feasibility of getting up a prize-fight between Barney and the East Indian champion, Seid Magar?" asked Frank, who had listened with some amusement to the foregoing characteristic conversation.

"Faith an' we are, thin."

"Golly! dat's so."

Thus replied Barney and Pomp almost simultaneously.

Frank laughed.

He had heard all about Seid Magar while in the city of Lahore.

The native was a powerful athlete, boxer and wrestler, who had for some time been the acknowledged champion of India.

It was said that he had thus far easily defeated every man, native or European, who had met him either in a prize fight or in a boxing match.

Among the East Indians as well as among the Japs wrestling and boxing are accomplishments, and travelers tell us much about the skill of the North of India men in athletic contests.

Of course the rules of the native wrestlers and boxers are different from ours, but their methods are about the same.

Now Frank Reade knew that Barney O'Shea was very handy with his fists, and a splendid boxer. But the young American thought it would be folly for the reckless Irishman to attempt to stand up before a professional and an acknowledged champion.

"I think if you were to meet Magar, the East Indian, in a pugilistic encounter, we should have to erect your monument here in India, Barney, and there would be a widow by the name of O'Shea in America," said Frank.

"Begob I'm a lineal, descindint av ould King Borrough, the fightin' king av Ireland, whose coat av arrums wuz a shillalah an' a flask! Long loife til the likes av me. But if a nagur av Inje kin be afther puttin' Barney O'Shea 'to sleep' thin it's buried he wants to be," replied the belligerent Barney.

"Nonsense. You are not a professional prize-fighter."

"Begob an' in the ould sod sure an' I was that same, an' sure an' it's not all me ould tricks I hev' forgotten. Be me soul an' it was Barney Sullivan, the Irish champion, as used to box wid the boys av us in Clonyolinty in the years agone."

"Well, I do not care to lose you. Besides, I promised Mrs. O'Shea to bring you home safe and sound. So you must not fight the East Indian champion."

"Sure, masther, dear, yez would not have the heart to forbid a small bit av an illigant little ruction wid the nagur by the way av a bit av a diversion?" pleaded Barney.

"That's just what I mean. I'll have no fighting. Understand me, Barney, and you too, Pomp. You must not fight the East Indian champion," said Frank, earnestly.

"Worra! Sure, an me life is wan bitter disappointment as the widdy Looney said whin she buried her seventh husband," wailed Barney.

"Sahib, you have done well," said Mohammed.

"How so?" replied Frank.

"In forbidding your men to fight Seid Magar."

"Then you think he is worthy of his great name?"

"Yes, sahib. And he is a terrible fellow. He has killed more than one man who has met him in the ring with a single blow."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, and on that account he is sometimes called the 'Dead Boxer.'"

"Ah, a terrible title."

"It is, but well deserved. You see, the champion has a trick o' striking a certain peculiar blow which kills his man."

"Well, well; he is certainly a more formidable party than I had supposed."

"He is as cruel as he is skillful."

"A brute, eh?"

"Yes, and his temper is frightful. I saw him in a prize fight once. I shall never forget the scene. He killed his antagonist with a single blow in the second round."

"You hear that, Barney?"

Frank turned to the Irishman as he spoke.

"Yes, sur," answered Barney, tersely and sullenly.

"So take warning," added Mohammed.

"Begob, an' yez mane well, Moham, ould hulks, and ye are welcome. Take hould an' drink hearty," said Barney.

Then as he spoke he presented his flask to the East Indian.

Mohammed's patience was exhausted, and he struck the flask from Barney's hand, and it fell to the ground, and Pomp roared in delight.

"That manes foight, begob!" cried Barney.

"Sure, masther dear, Moham is not a champion. Let us have a bit av ruction be the way av practice."

"No, no, you foolish fellow. But if you do not cease constantly tantalizing our friend by offering him your whisky when you know very well he is a strict teetotaler, I shall cut off your supply of grog," said Frank.

"Orrah! Thin it's a dead mon I'd be. Widout a wee drop av a mornin' to cut the dust out av me

mate-trap, how would the loikes av me live in this devil's own climate?"

"Then be warned in time," said Frank, laughing, and Barney picked up his flask, saying:

"But, begob, though it's afther insultin' an Irish gentleman yez are, Moham, ould rocks, sure, an' since ye are the master's friend, it's welcome ye are. Take hold wance."

Again Barney proffered his flask to Mohammed.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### BARNEY'S CHALLENGE.

WHAT the consequences of Barney's mischievous conduct might have been we cannot say, for just then Frank and his companions met the men who were approaching, and one of them called out:

"Sahib, are you the European who was lost?"

"I am Frank Reade," replied the young inventor.

"And we are members of a party of men engaged by your friends to search for you," replied the native.

"Where is the Electric Team?" asked Frank.

"It is coming. You must know, sire, that after the two of your European friends who are now with you went into the jungle in their steel clothing, a swift messenger, well mounted, came from Lahore with news that caused the Europeans in the electric carriage to turn back to the city."

"What news did the messenger bring?"

"That the Nautch girl whom your party brought to the city had disappeared."

"Ah, and we have found her," replied Frank, as he indicated Runee. "I can well understand how Moreland's anxiety prompted him to run back to the city," he added.

"Well, begob, we may as well go on until we mate the 'lectric coach an' team, for now wid the min who have just met us faith an' we are strong enough to give the jungle nagurs an illigant shindy if they make a show at us," said Barney.

"Yes," Frank Reade assented, and so the party, augmented by the native hunters, continued on along the road to Lahore.

"Sahib," said Mohammed, presently, "you have not as yet told us how you so strangely disappeared from the electric coach."

"Yes, an' bedad it's runnin' over wid curiosity we are about that same," put in Barney.

"The explanation is simple. As I learned from the conversation of the tree-dwellers, subsequently to my disappearance, they discovered the approach of the Electric Team before it arrived at the place in the jungle where I vanished. It seems Tippoo Kahn has offered a reward for my capture, and so the tree-dwellers, who are in league with the scoundrel, cunningly planned to secure me."

"An' I'll wager be me sowl that they whisked yez up into the trees, Masther Frank," interplated Barney.

"Quite right. Seeing that I was alone on the top of the coach, the tree-dwellers went on ahead of the Electric Team until they arrived at the point on our way where the trees almost joined their branches above our heads."

"And, begob, thin they grabbed yez up!" anticipated Barney.

"Right again. The rascals are wonderfully expert climbers, being tree-dwellers, and they concealed themselves in the branches above the coach. Then, when the vehicle was passing, two of them reached down and lifted me up into the trees. One of them fastened a firm hold upon my throat, and I was only able to utter a single cry."

"And we heard that same. But shure an' how did the blackguards get away wid ye widout lavin' so much as a single mark av their feet on the soft ground under the trees?"

"The tree-dwellers are as active in the branches as the monkeys, and they carried me some distance from tree to tree without descending to the ground. The branches interlaced so closely for a long space that the tree-men did not find it very difficult to do so. And when they finally descended to the ground with me they selected a spot where the jungle turf would not leave a track. Then they bound me and hurried me away to their huts in the trees further away in the jungle."

"And how did you elude the cunning tree-dwellers and rescue Runee?" asked Mohammed.

"I was placed in one of the tree huts, and the door was secured. As I was bound the natives thought I could not escape, but I found a native's knife in the hut and managed to rub my fetters, which secured my wrists, on its blade until I severed them. Then I untied the remaining cords which secured my ankles. I had witnessed the arrival of Runee, and I resolved to attempt her rescue."

"That's loike yez, Masther Frank," said Barney. Frank smiled as he continued, without heeding the interruption:

"So, late at night, I made a hole in the roof of my hut, and crept through it into the branches of the

great tree above. Then as I had watched and seen where Runee was taken, I reached her hut and got her safely out, and we reached the ground. You all know what ensued, and that Runee and myself owe our final escape to you, Mohammed, and also to the bravery and reckless daring of Barney and Pomp."

"Begob, an' it was all the suit av mail. Shure an' it's a great thing these mail suits are, an' begob it's electricity as is the power to paralyze the nagurs," said Barney exultantly.

"Golly! dat's so. Barney and me was 'lectric men when we went in on dat racket!" assented Pomp.

Then Frank Reade questioned Runee, and she related how she had fallen into the clutches of her foes, saying in conclusion:

"I am sure now that the old Brahmin was an impostor and acting in the interest of Tippoo Kahn. But since the face of the Brahmin is one of the shadowy memories of my earliest childhood, the idea is firmly established in my mind that probably he knows the secret of my parentage. Oh, I wish that he might be induced to reveal the truth."

"Perhaps he may be induced to do so if he possesses the knowledge," said Frank, thoughtfully.

The young inventor was becoming interested in the history of the young girl, and he would very much have liked to solve the mystery which surrounded her.

The party walked onward steadily, and after a long distance had been traversed they were delighted by seeing a brilliant light ahead, which was coming swiftly toward them.

"There comes the Electric Team!" cried Frank. Such proved to be the fact, and the wonderful team and the coach it drew soon met the American inventor's party.

Dr. Vaneyke and Moreland were on the coach, and how delighted they were at finding Frank and Runee among friends, both safe and unharmed, may easily be imagined.

Happy indeed were the reunited ones, and all boarded the electric coach, and the return journey to Lahore was made as swiftly as possible.

The beautiful Nautch girl was again taken to the residency, and extra precautions were arranged to guard her.

The Americans meant to push on for the frontier of Afghanistan early next day, but Frank received a most pressing invitation to dine with the officers of the British garrison of the city, and as one of these officers had fought in the Afghan war, and could give some valuable information regarding the country in which the inventor now believed Richard Carlyle, the missing explorer, to be held in slavery, Frank resolved to attend the banquet.

He did so in company with the doctor, Moreland and Sir George Peyton, the resident. The dinner was a success, but several of the Englishmen present took occasion to vent their national prejudices against America and Americans when the wine had circulated so freely as to render them negligent of the amenities due their guests.

There was an officer to whom Frank Reade and his comrades took a particular dislike from the first on account of his arrogant and overbearing manner, and the patronizing manner he assumed at the outset.

Colonel Stedman was the officer's name, and as he became flushed with wine he became more and more insulting in his remarks about Americans, though his brother officers, in the majority, were gentlemen, and sought to shut him up.

The conversation had turned upon athletic sports, boxing, wrestling, and the like, and the relative merits of different nationalities were discussed.

Colonel Stedman affirmed that England led the world in pugilists and athletes of all kinds, while Frank Reade pleasantly but firmly asserted his opinion that America at all events could produce the champion prize fighter of the world.

"Bah! there are a dozen Englishmen who can whip your American champion and not half try. The Americans can't fight. Why there's a native here in town who could whip your greatest champion in no time," sneered Colonel Stedman.

Barney O'Shea had attended his master as body servant at the banquet, and he was now waiting in the cloak-room. The door was ajar, and the Irishman heard what Stedman said. The officer's servants had given Barney a glass too much, truth to say, and, heedless of the breach of instructions which he was guilty of, he entered the dining-room and blurted out in a loud voice: "I am Mr. Frank Reade's servant. Begob, I'm an Irish-American an' I can lick any man in Inje in a fair standup fight, prize ring rules or no."

## CHAPTER XXX.

### TWO CHALLENGES.

FRANK READE was very much surprised at

Barney's entrance, and his defiant challenge, though a direct disobedience of his orders, did not offend Frank at heart, for he was just then flushed with indignation at the arrogant Englishman's tone and manner.

"Is that fellow your servant, Mr. Reade?" demanded Colonel Stedman.

"He is," replied Frank, tersely.

"And do you dare to back him up in his challenge?"

Frank's face flushed. He was not in the habit of taking a dare from any man. The eyes of all the Englishmen were upon him, and, right or wrong, the young American felt that just then it devolved upon him to vindicate the honor of his country. Still Frank intuitively knew that he should not allow Barney to fight the dreaded East Indian champion. He hesitated, and, observing that he did so, Stedman said tauntingly:

"I hope you, the master, are not lacking in the spirit of your man. But if you are seeking to back down for him, please say so."

"I am not aware that I have as yet taken any position from which it is necessary for me to recede, or, as you elegantly put it, 'back down,'" replied Frank.

"Your servant has issued a challenge. You must support him or make him withdraw it. I knew there was a grain of cowardice in all Americans."

"Colonel Stedman!" exclaimed the resident, and several officers appealed to the insulting fellow to retract his words.

Frank remained silent, and he held Barney so by a stern glance of his eyes. Stedman took Frank's silence for an evidence of cowardice.

Even the English resident and the others evidently thought, too, that Frank was lacking in manly spirit.

The young American saw them all looking at him with mingled pity and contempt plainly expressed in their glances.

Stedman went on to blusteringly reiterate his insulting statement.

Frank waited until he paused, then he arose quietly. Moreland and Dr. Vaneyke had not said a word. They had noted the quick, fiery flash in the eyes of the young American inventor, and they were fully satisfied that he would resent the Englishman's unprovoked insult like a brave man, all in good time.

When he had gained his feet Frank said, in clear, ringing tones:

"Gentlemen, let me say, in the first instance, that I fully support my servant in the challenge he has made, and I will wager any amount you or this bully, Stedman, will name that Barney O'Shea can whip the champion of India."

"I—I—" began Stedman.

"Silence, you insulting scoundrel!" fairly hissed Frank.

"I wish to add," he continued, transfixing the officer with a glance, "that when my man has whipped your champion I'll meet you and punish you as you deserve on the field of honor, and vindicate the bravery of America and Americans."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Moreland, whose enthusiasm was aroused by the young inventor's thrilling words.

"Whoop!" yelled Barney in unbounded delight. "Be mesoul, an' it's a ruction we will be afther havin' now, in spite av' all the bad luck in the wurrudd. It's a happy man I am the day. Ould Ireland an' America foriver against Inje an' England! Sare an' now bring on the nagur champion til ye see Barney O'Shea bate the head av' him."

"Silence, Barney!" cried Frank.

Colonel Stedman was thunderstruck at the young American's sudden defiance, and his tone of voice was by no means as aggressive as he said:

"Do you mean to challenge me to fight a duel?"

"You must either fight or apologize for the insulting words you have uttered to me in the presence of these gentlemen," replied Frank.

"Then I'll fight. Captain Bracebridge will call on any friend of yours you may name to arrange the meeting," said Stedman.

"Mr. Moreland here will act as my second," answered Frank.

Then he added:

"And now about the proposed prize-fight."

"Ah, yes. I name Seid Magar, the champion of India, as my man," said Stedman.

"When can he meet my man?"

"Now," replied Stedman. "The great pugilist of India is quartered in the bungalow just across the way. I'll send for him and the fight shall take place in the public parade ground in an hour if you agree."

"Consint! Bedad, I'm ready an' waitin', as the colleen said whin the bridegroom was behind time at the weddin'!" cried Barney.

"Very well. In one hour my man will meet the East Indian on the parade ground. A ring twenty-four feet regulation size must be set up and the

fight must be conducted squarely and fairly according to the English rules," said Frank.

"Agreed," replied Stedman.

Then Frank and his friends withdrew, and the young inventor said to Barney:

"Have you really perfect confidence in yourself?"

"Yis, be the powers!"

"Remember you are to meet a scientific boxer."

"Sure an' I know that. Take all the wagers the red coats will lay, an' rest aisy that I won't make yez lose yer money, Masther Frank."

"All right. Of course you will need a second."

"That's so, bedad. Pomp will do for me."

"Yes. And now to see him."

They went to the residency, where they were now guests, and found Pomp, who was delighted when he heard of the fight which was about to take place.

Barney asked Pomp if he would second him.

"Golly, you bet you socks dis coon will do dat, an' if any ob dem niggers try any gum games, I'll sail in an' butt de daylight out ob dem," said Pomp.

Everything was arranged, and Frank and his friends were about to set out for the fighting grounds, when Mohammed, who had absented himself for a time, came in and said:

"The news of the impending fight has spread all through the town, and the natives are assembling in multitudes at the parade ground. I have been among them listening to their conversation, and I have found out that they intend to break into the ring and mob Barney in case he proves himself too much for the native champion."

"I'm glad you have warned us of that, Mohammed. I'll just put my bayonet-rack on the Electric Team, and leave you in charge of it near the parade ground. If you hear my whistle you charge the crowd with the Electric Team until you rush the metal steeds to the ring," said Frank.

"Yes, sahib, I understand," assented Mohammed.

Then Frank went out and fastened an iron bar across the breasts of the electric steeds like a neck-yoke, and in the bar he screwed six army bayonets so that they protruded in front of the team.

"There," said Frank, when this was accomplished, "it will take a bayonet charge to scatter the crowd in case of trouble, and a genuine bayonet charge we shall have if Mohammed charges with the Electric Team now."

Then all except Mohammed repaired to the parade-ground. There a regulation twenty-four foot ring had been pitched, and around it was assembled a vast multitude of the swarthy native populace, and a small party of soldiers and officers from the garrison.

Sir George Peyton was asked to act as referee, but he declined. Finally a subordinate officer was agreed upon. Then Barney, naked to the waist, and wearing a pair of tight white knee-breeches secured with a green scarf and a red, white and blue knot, leaped into the ring.

The succeeding moment and the native champion vaulted over the ropes.

A hush fell upon the great throng as the two champions faced each other in the center of the ring.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### IN AFGHANISTAN.

THE brave Irishman was now in his element, and in a moment the battle between him and the East Indian champion opened.

Barney and Seid Magar began to spar cautiously, each seeking to learn something of the other's method.

The East Indian presently aimed a terrific blow straight at Barney's head, but the Irishman "ducked" his head so quickly that Magar's great fist shot by his ear without touching him.

Then Barney swiftly countered, and caught the East Indian a stinging blow on the cheek.

This infuriated Magar. His eyes flashed with a fierce, evil light, and he made a rush at the Irishman, dealing blows with rapidity and force.

For some moments Barney had all he could do to defend himself from the furious attack, and yet at the same time he found out the tactics of his adversary to some extent.

Presently Barney dodged under the East Indian's right arm as he struck furiously, and as he wheeled upon the agile Irishman the latter got in a terrific "upper cut" or swinging sledge hammer blow directly upon Magar's ear, and the East Indian went down all in a heap.

This closed the round with everything in favor of Barney, and the assembled multitude in favor of the native, set up angry yells.

We do not wish to detail the particulars of a prize fight, for no good can be derived from such a narration. At best the prize ring is but the scene for the exhibition of the brutal side of man, and the

contestants lower themselves to the level of beasts. They may show the stubborn courage of the bull dog, but there is nothing in the fame of the pugilist to inspire the youth with any praiseworthy spirit of emulation.

We may merely say that four exciting rounds were fought by Barney and the East Indian, and in the fourth round the Irishman, by a fortunate blow, finally succeeded in knocking the champion of India senseless.

After waiting the usual period time was called, but Seid Magar had not as yet regained consciousness, and he was unable to respond to the call.

So the battle was decided in Barney's favor, and then the native multitude exhibited their rage.

Mad yells resounded on every side. It was claimed by Seid Magar's adherents that Barney had not fought fairly.

But there was no justice in this claim, and the referee refused to change his decision.

Frank Reade saw the crowd pressing through the ropes which inclosed the ring.

He knew that the enraged natives meant to mob Barney, and so with his comrades he dashed into the ring.

In a moment Barney's friends surrounded him, and with revolvers drawn held the angry mob in check for a moment.

But the young inventor saw that his little band could not long save Barney from his furious foes.

"Now the time has come to call Mohammed and the Electric Team to the rescue," Frank whispered.

"Yes," said the doctor. "See, the natives are preparing for a combined rush, and although the English officers are trying to hold them in check, they cannot do so."

"Quick! Give the signal you agreed upon with Mohammed, or presently we shall find ourselves overwhelmed!" cried Moreland.

Frank put his fingers to his lips, and sounded a shrill, peculiar whistle.

"Begob, an' it's a putty country where a man can't have a fair show in a square bit av a shindy. But, begob, I hev' put the Aste Inje moke to sleep, anyhow," said Barney.

"Gollie! But dat fellow went down like a log. I spec' he seed all de stars in de sky fo' sure!" cried Pomp, in delight.

But now the mob was pressing steadily forward.

The Americans did not wish to fire upon the enraged populace save in case of urgent necessity, in self defense.

And as the threatening mob advanced nearer and nearer, although all the members of Frank Reade's party kept their weapons presented, they did not discharge them.

A moment or two of suspenseful excitement ensued, and it seemed that a conflict between the Americans could scarcely be longer averted, when the electric bell was heard ringing out in a thrilling chime.

Then through the crowd that fell away like frightened sheep before the row of bayonets presented from the bar across the breasts of the wonderful metallic steeds, the Electric Team came charging forward.

Mohammed had been on the alert for Frank Reade's whistle, and as soon as he heard it he sent the Electric Team forward.

Straight through the throng, shouting in the native language to the mob to give way on their lives, Mohammed directed the course of the Electric Team.

He reached the ring, and the succeeding moment drew up beside Frank Reade and his comrade.

It was the work of a moment for all of them to leap aboard the coach.

Then it was put in motion, and ran swiftly away.

The young inventor took the main guiding lever in hand as soon as he gained his place in the coach, and directed the course of the team.

Soon the parade ground and the mob was left behind, and Frank ran the Electric Team to the palace of Sir George Peyton, the English resident.

Some moments later, while the party were discussing the advisability of immediately leaving the city, the English resident and one of the officers with whom the Americans had dined arrived.

Both the Englishmen sincerely deplored the unfair conduct of the native population and congratulated Barney on his victory and escape from the mob.

Then the officer said:

"Colonel Stedman has thought better of his ungentlemanly conduct, and he has sent me to tender you his apology."

"Very well, I accept it. I had no desire to engage him in a duel, but his conduct was such as no gentleman could pass by unrebuked," replied Frank.

The officer who came as Colonel Stedman's messenger was the very man who had fought in the Afghan war, and from whom Frank had hoped

to obtain some information about the country he was about to visit.

In the excitement of the episode which led to his challenging Stedman, the young American had neglected at the dinner to question the officer about Afghanistan, as he intended.

He now repaired that oversight and questioned the officer at some length regarding Afghanistan and the Afghans.

The officer proved to be a man of intelligence, and in reply to Frank's interrogatories he gave him some valuable information, which the young American felt could be relied upon, since it was the result of personal observation.

When the interview between Frank and the English officer ended, preparations were made for leaving the city.

Moreland took a tender farewell of Runee, and bidding good-bye to the resident, the inventor and his comrades started the Electric Team, and they got out of the city in safety.

The journey of our friends was continued uneventfully for some days.

Finally the frontier of India was crossed, and at last Frank and his party found themselves on Afghan territory.

Afghanistan is a great plateau of Central Asia, and it is a remarkable country.

No other land on the face of the globe has such a diversity of climate. While the temperature on the elevated plains of Ghazni is frequently ten degrees to fifteen degrees below zero at Kandahar, in the south, the heat in the summer reaches 120 degrees.

Afghanistan is also distinguished for its mountain passes and for the war-like character of its numerous clans.

The amir is the military dictator, and two-thirds of his wild, half civilized subjects are Mohammedans.

Through Afghanistan India has frequently been invaded, and the British have had several wars with the people of the Afghan kingdom, notably the last war, which cost Great Britain many men and much expense.

When Afghanistan was entered, Frank Reade and his party felt that new perils and adventures were to be encountered, but they were all determined to accomplish the two-fold purpose of their journey—the finding of Richard Carlyle and the recovery of the treasure of the Parsees, if it was in the power of men so to do.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE WRITING ON THE ROCK.

THE inventor's party, as the reader will remember, had a clew to guide them in the search for Richard Carlyle.

They believed that the missing explorer was slave in the power of the mountain chieftan called Balkar, who was the friend of Ameer Selim, the sultan who had given Mohammed's friend the explorer's gold medal.

Now, since the Americans were assured that the stronghold of the chief Balkar was situated in the fastness of the Hindoo-Coosh Mountains, they resolved to shape their course as directly as possible toward these high, rocky wilds.

Mohammed's services as a guide were now invaluable.

His knowledge of the country rendered him fully competent to direct the course of the party.

Through a country remarkable for the beauty of its scenery the first stage of the journey led our friends.

The Afghans were at this time nominally at peace with the English of India, but the wild tribes are natural robbers and murderers, and Frank Reade's party maintained a constant watch to guard against a surprise.

The highways in the southern part of the country were so well made that the Electric Team traversed them easily and swiftly.

One night just at sunset, as the way wound through some rocky hills, Frank Reade from the top of the electric coach made a discovery.

The vehicle was passing a great cliff, whose smooth rocky wall arose many feet in height from the rugged, tortuous trail.

All at once Frank reversed the main lever, and gradually withdrawing the motive power of the electric current from the machinery, he brought the team to a halt.

Then pointing at the smooth surface of the rock that loomed up close beside the electric conveyance, Frank said:

"Look yonder! Surely there on the face of the rock is carved a line of writing."

"It is so!" assented the doctor, following with his glance the direction indicated by his comrade.

"Yes, and certainly those are English characters, but the writing is so high up on the great rock that I cannot clearly make it out," replied Frank.

"Begob!" cried Barney as Frank got out his field-glass, "it's mesel' as is thinkin' that no Englishman could come here to do his writin' on stone."

"Gollie, maybe you got no sense. Ain't de man we am lookin' fo' English, or Merican, an' da boff write de same way," said Pomp.

"That's so. Ah, if it should be! Pomp has given me an idea. Get out your glass as quickly as you can, Frank," cried the doctor with some excitement.

Frank already had the glass in his hand.

He wiped its glass sight carefully, and having properly adjusted it leveled it at the characters traced on the white rock.

"What do you make out?" asked the doctor, eagerly.

Frank was silent for an instant while he closely scanned the characters on the rock.

Then he said:

"Certainly the writing is in English."

"Can you read it?" asked the doctor.

"Wait, I am trying to do so now. It seems that the writing has been partially effaced and some portions of it are indistinct."

"Ah, now I read it. This is a piece of rare good luck, doctor. Repress your excitement, and I will read the writing," said Frank.

There was silence then, and all listened with the greatest interest.

Then Frank read the inscription.

But he found some difficulty in doing so, and he was obliged to make frequent pauses between the words.

Finally the reading was completed thus:

"I am a captive in the power of Balkar, a chief of the mountains. His town is to the northwest and the trail at the waterfall leads to it. For the love of God let any Christian who reads this seek to save me."

"RICHARD CARLYLE."

"Whoop!" cried Barney. "Did yez ever strike anything more lucky, Masther Frank? Here's luck to the lost man, be gob!"

The jolly Irishman pulled out his flask as he spoke and took a drink, and then handed it to Mohammed.

"Drink, old hulk; there's nobody lookin' but me," he said.

Mohammed uttered an exclamation expressive of his annoyance, and with a quick movement Pomp snatched the bottle out of Barney's grasp and drained it at a gulp or two, almost before the Irishman knew what had happened.

The next moment Barney jumped at Pomp and aimed a blow at his head, as he cried:

"Bad luck till ye, ye black blackguard! Take that, will yez!"

"No, Barney, I don't want it. I see mighty generous, I is, so I'll gib you a present dat you'se jess dyn' fer. Here it am."

As he spoke Pomp suddenly ducked his head and butted Barney over. He fell against Mohammed, and they both rolled off the coach to the ground. Barney scrambled up, and the East Indian was on his feet in a second. The two stood glaring at each other for an instant, while Pomp roared with laughter.

What might have ensued cannot be told, for at that moment Frank Reade shouted to Barney:

"Apologize to Mohammed for knocking him off the coach this instant, Barney."

"Faith an' it's the nagur should do that, bad luck till the eyes av him! But since yeax me, Masther Frank, I can't refuse yez. An' so, Moham, old boy, if I did ye any harm I'm glad of it, an' no offense."

Mohammed looked a trifle perplexed, and even Frank laughed. But the East Indian turned away from Barney, and so the difficulty that threatened was averted.

The little by play had not interested the doctor. He was all excitement and interest over the discovery of the message on the wall.

"Now we have a certain clew. We will follow the trail the writing on the wall tells of to the village of the Afghan chief," he said.

"Certainly, doctor. But while I do not wish to dash your hopes, there is one point you must not overlook," replied Frank.

"What is that?" the doctor asked.

"The writing on the wall must have been carved there a long time ago."

"Yes. And so you think, since he traced the words we have read, my poor unfortunate cousin Richard may have perished?"

"Such a thought occurred to me."

"Well, we will hope for the best."

"Sahib," said Mohammed, at this juncture, "the Afghans are near."

"How do you know that?" demanded Frank, quickly.

"Look yonder."

Mohammed pointed over the rocky hills as he spoke.

Frank then discerned a column of smoke arising.

"That smoke comes from an Afghan camp-fire," said Mohammed.

"No doubt you are right," assented the young inventor.

"I propose that some of our party make a scout

and seek to learn who is near. Perhaps the smoke we see comes from the camp-fire of some band of Chief Balkar's men," suggested the doctor.

"Agreed. Mohammed, shall you and I go?" said Frank.

"Yes, sahib, or I will go alone," responded Mohammed, readily.

"No; I prefer to accompany you," rejoined Frank; "and two persons will be less likely to be discovered than a larger party," he added.

"Sahib, you are right. We shall have to ascend to the top of the hill, and then I think we shall obtain a view of the camp whence we think the smoke arises."

"Yes," replied Frank, and, having armed themselves, he and Mohammed left the coach and began to climb the rugged hill.

They were soon lost to the sight of their friends. Half an hour went by, and then the men with the Electric Team heard the report of a gun.

"Dat was Marse Frank's rifle dat spoke," said Pomp.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### A WHITE MAN IN CAPTIVITY.

FRANK READE and his East Indian comrade found the ascent of the steep and rugged hill more difficult than they had anticipated.

Rocks were heaped about in confusion, as though at some remote period of time the range of hills had been upheaved by volcanic action.

The soil between the rocks was scanty, and only a few bushes of stunted growth found sustenance in it.

The hill-side was passed by Frank and Mohammed finally, and they arrived at its summit.

Then crouching behind the rocks they peered down into the valley beyond.

They saw an extensive plateau or plain carpeted with verdant grass, and there were trees and shrubbery scattered about to diversify the pastoral scene.

At the foot of the hill the inventor and Mohammed beheld an Afghan camp.

This was composed of a number of rude tents, something like the *ouals* of the Tartar tribes of Asiatic Russia.

Among the tents were a band of some twenty wild-looking fellows with long guns in their hands, whose dark faces and gleaming eyes, with the light of the camp fire upon them, looked particularly ferocious.

They wore pointed caps, loose trousers, and colored scarfs were used as girdles in which they carried curved swords.

Beyond the tents were the horses of the band, which were picketed out to feed upon the rich grass of the valley.

All at once a tall chief, attended by several others, and one old fellow to whom all seemed to accord the greatest respect, came out of one of the tents and addressed some command to his men.

Instantly they divided into two bands, and ran to their horses and mounted them.

Then one party came taring forward as if flying for their lives, straight toward the hill where Frank and Mohammed were hidden.

The other party came dashing after them in full cry, firing their long guns, and yelling like mad.

Frank was startled, not to say alarmed. He fancied the Afghans suspected his presence, and that they were rushing at him.

He grasped Mohammed's arm, saying:

"Quick! let us beat a retreat! Those rascals surely mean to try to rush their horses up the steep hillside and reach us."

"No, no. It is *sport*, sahib."

"Sport!"

"Yes; see, see."

Frank then saw that the foremost party of the Afghans suddenly wheeled round and went dashing back at their pursuers like a thunderbolt.

In a moment they were all mixed up together in a whirl of powder smoke, stabbing, hacking, slashing and pounding with their spear butts, while their horses kicked and bit fiercely.

"It's only a sham battle for the entertainment of the old sultan yonder, I think," said Mohammed.

This was true, for almost all at once the mock combat ended with nobody hurt.

Then the chief uttered a call, and a man came out of a tent carrying a huge bowl of some steaming mixture which he placed before the chiefs, who seated themselves around it, each being provided with a wooden spoon, and presently began to eat.

Frank Reade was directed to observe the man who brought the food to the Afghan chiefs very closely, for he saw, that while he was in rags, his garments were those of a European.

The young inventor had brought his field glass, and, with some excitement, in view of a possible discovery of importance, he leveled the implement over a rock, and through the lense inspected the man in the tattered costume of a European more closely.

In a moment or so Frank had assured himself

that the man was really a white man and a European.

Although the features were bronzed by exposure to a color almost as dark as the complexion of the Afghans, still the outlines of his features which the magnifying glass brought out told Frank that he was not making an error.

But Frank had seen the portrait of Richard Carlyle, and the first thought which had come to his mind that the European was the lost explorer, was immediately dispelled by swift observation.

The European whom the inventor had discovered was much younger than Richard Carlyle.

Then, too, they were not in the least alike either in features or form.

"The man who brought the bowl of steaming food to the Afghans is a European, but he is not the lost explorer we are in quest of," said Frank to Mohammed, presently.

"Then who can he be, sahib?" asked Mohammed.

"I know not. Moreland and yourself reported that only Richard Carlyle of your party was left alive in Afghanistan."

Frank was still attentively watching the European through the glass, and he added:

"The unfortunate fellow, whoever he may be, is clearly a captive and a slave. See, the Afghan chief just gave him a blow with his spear and ordered him to do something, and he is going toward the horses."

This was so, as Mohammed, without the aid of the glass, could see.

But the East Indian suddenly gave a violent start.

"Can it be that after all he is yet alive!" he exclaimed.

"What do you mean?" asked Frank.

"I think, sahib, that yonder European is really Captain Jack Conway, whom we left for dead when the fight between Richard Carlyle's party and the Afghans took place, in which the explorer was captured."

"Take the glass and look closely," cried Frank. Mohammed did so.

In a moment he said:

"I was right. That man is Captain Conway."

"And as I live he is making a dash to escape!" cried Frank.

At that very instant, having reached the horses from which the Afghans who had engaged in the sham battle had just dismounted, the European was seen to leap upon one of those animals.

The next moment he came rushing at full speed toward the hill, and he obtained a start before the Afghans, who were apparently for the moment dumfounded at his daring attempt, could mount and pursue him.

But presently the entire savage band flung themselves upon the backs of their steeds, and came after the fugitive.

Frank and Mohammed looked to their weapons, for they were anxious to assist the escaping man.

But they feared he could not reach them.

On arriving at the hillside the fugitive threw himself from the back of his horse, and then, inspired by the thought that he was striving for life, he began to ascend the rocky elevation with speed that surprised the hidden spectators, as they saw the obstacles in his way.

"Make our presence known, Mohammed, that Conway may come toward us!" said Frank.

Then Mohammed shouted:

"Captain Conway, Mohammed and friends are here!" and he showed himself from behind the rock.

The fugitive uttered a glad shout and came straight toward the hiding place of his friends.

He reached them, but a giant Afghan who had dismounted to follow him up the hill pressed him close and Frank discharged his weapon at the fellow and he went head first down among the rocks.

As soon as Conway reached them, Frank and Mohammed fled with him toward the electric coach. They were followed by the Afghans on foot.

But the coach was reached and the three fugitives entered it, and it was started forward. The Afghans ran along on the summit of the steep range, and a few moments subsequently their united efforts dislodged a great rock, and sent it thundering down upon the pathway, directly in front of the Electric Team.

There were steep walls on either side, and the Electric Team could not pass the fallen rock. Frank was about to run back when another great rocky mass fell behind the electric coach, and the little party was hemmed in.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### IN THE AFGHAN PASS.

THE Afghans appeared on the summits of the hills, and looked down upon the pass in which the inventor's party were hemmed in between the two massive boulders which they had dislodged and sent crashing down the declivity to shut the Electric Team in between walls of stone.

Over the rocks above the eager, exultant faces peered like a legion of fierce gnomes, their greasy black hair straggling about their weird, savage features, almost hiding their slanting forehead, small, narrow eyes, and lending additional ugliness to their profiles.

And through the gathering shadows of the night which was approaching, the harsh, discordant voices of the triumphant Afghans rang loudly, and the rugged, rocky bluffs, like citadel walls, caught up and re-echoed the fierce cries, until it seemed as if all the dead spirits of the mountains, of which the Afghan legends tell, had joined in the terrible menacing yell.

To the northward the snowy crests of the distant mountains, of which the rocky hills in which the Electric Team was caught were an outlying range, loomed up glimmering faintly along the darkening sky.

From the rock bound way ahead came the faint sound of falling water. It was the falls where the handwriting on the rock told the Europeans the trail turned aside and led on and on to the mountain guarded retreat of Balkar the dreaded chief of the Afghans.

There could be no doubt that the Afghans were confident that they had caught the foreigners in a snare whence there was no escape. Their manner so exultant and assured proclaimed this, but Frank Reade was by no means ready to agree with his swarthy foes.

On the contrary the young American rendered hopeful by past experiences was cool, collected and determined to yet extricate himself from the present situation and save the Electric Team and the comrades of his expedition.

As soon as he found that his retreat as well as his advance was cut off, the young inventor said, as he shut off all the electricity from the machinery:

"Well here we are, caught again. But I don't mean to stay caught."

"Right ye are, Masther Frank. It's a bit av a ruction we'll be afther havin' wid the ugly divils to learn thin to respict a party av gentlemen, an' thin we'll say good avenin' til the blackguards, and go on, be gob," said Barney.

The doctor's face wore a troubled look, and Moreland's expression showed that he was anxious. Mohammed was as stoical and unmoved as usual, while Pomp's face wore a grin.

"Gollie, I spees dat we hab got to git de big gun turned on dem fellers putty quick, Mars Frank," he suggested.

"Yes," assented the inventor. "We are in a tight place, friends, but no worse perhaps than we have seen before. We must commence to shell the hills and prevent the Afghans descending to the pass. We have only to fear a close attack."

"And meanwhile we must devise some means to remove the obstructions in our way," said the doctor, as Frank turned to the cannon, and assisted by Barney and Pomp, proceeded to train the great gun so as to command the hills.

Meanwhile Captain Jack Conway had been warmly welcomed by all, and the rescued man evinced the greatest astonishment at the Electric Team, and all he saw of the great invention of Frank Reade.

But the exigencies of the occasion caused him to refrain from seeking to immediately gratify his curiosity by putting questions.

The Afghans were seen to be preparing for a charge down the hillside, intending to capture the Electric Team by a sudden rush, and a moment or so subsequently Frank discharged the cannon.

The cannon had been charged with an explosive shell, and it exploded near the massed forces of Afghans, sending them back in confusion, while the loud detonation reverberated through the hills.

"That shot will prove a warning to the Afghans I think, for they have some knowledge of the destructive power of cannon since the British used their great guns against them in the last war," said Frank Reade, observing the result of the first shell.

"True," observed Conway, "but the report. Ah, the wild savage clan of the mountains will hear it afar. They will take the alarm and assemble in full force to overwhelm us."

"I had thought of that, but the necessity was imperative," replied Frank, and then while the cannon was being quickly recharged by Barney and Pomp, all hands put on their suits of mail save the two cannoners who did so as soon as the cannon was again discharged.

The second shot drove the Afghans further away, and presently with threatening shouts they disappeared over the range.

"They have gone for reinforcements," said Conway, in a tone of conviction.

"But at all events we have secured at least a brief respite which we must hasten to improve," said Frank.

"Get out the drills," he added, addressing Barney and Pomp.

As yet there had been no time to question Conway, but now, while a pair of steel-pointed, finely-tempered drills, such as are used in our country for driving tunnels through solid rock, were procured from the supply locker and placed in position against the barrier ahead of the Electric Team, Dr. Vaneyke availed himself of the opportunity to question Conway.

Moreland and Mohammed too occasionally asked a question.

Thus, in a few moments, the reserve party gathered from Conway that, having only lost consciousness by reason of a severe wound, when Moreland and Mohammed left him for dead, he had recovered to find himself a captive.

"And what of my cousin, Richard Carlyle?" asked the doctor, with consuming anxiety.

"When I came to my senses after the terrible hand to hand fight, I found myself with Carlyle a prisoner surrounded by the Afghans," replied Conway.

"Yes, yes," urged the doctor, wishing to hasten the narration of the hunter.

"That night the Afghans cast lots to see which of the chiefs, who led the two bands, who had taken us, should have the choice of captives. There were two bands in the fight, led by Balkar, the mountain robber, and one Kassadar, a chief in league with him. The choice fell to Balkar, and he chose Carlyle for his slave, as he was not severely hurt. Then Balkar went away with his men taking Carlyle with him, while I was carried to the village of Kassadar, the old chief from whose band I this day escaped. I was cared for by the native doctor, and my wounds were healed. When I had recovered, my life of cruel slavery, which I have since endured in almost hopeless misery, began."

"And of the after fate of Richard Carlyle. Can you tell us anything further of him?" the doctor asked.

"I have not seen my old friend Carlyle since the day we were separated, but I believe from what I have heard that he is kept a close captive in Balkar's village, where he endures the same terrible slavery as fell to my lot," replied Captain Conway.

"How far is it to the stronghold of Carlyle's captors?" asked the doctor.

"About twenty miles to the north, I should say. The village of Balkar is in the heart of the Hindoo-Coosh range, where no white man has ever gone and returned thence alive."

"And is the band from whom you escaped still friendly with the clan of the mountain chief?"

"Yes, and they will join forces against us."

"Then the outlook for the rescue of my cousin is poor indeed."

"It is so, for swift runners will convey the news of your approach to Balkar, even if the report of your cannon has not been heard by any of his band who roam this part of the country. Look yonder. Surely that is a human form speeding along the nude, rocky crest of a hill afar to the northward in the direction of Balkar's village," said Conway, pointing as he spoke.

The doctor turned his glance in the direction indicated, and he saw a tall Afghan for a moment clearly defined against the sky on the summit far away. The man disappeared over the range, while yet the doctor saw him, and Conway continued:

"That Afghan warrior is surely a runner sent by Kassadar to warn Carlyle's captors of your presence in the hills."

"God help my poor cousin. We can only do our best to save him, and I will not yield to despair yet, for we have a wonderful invention on our side, and Frank Reade, Jr., is a host in himself," said the doctor.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### BARNEY'S SCHEME.

FRANK READE's purpose now was to remove the great rock which prevented the further advance of the Electric Team along the rugged mountain way.

Since the great boulder was far too large for the united efforts of the party to avail to roll it aside, the only feasible means whereby to remove it was to blast it in pieces.

The steel drills were mounted upon suitable frames on rollers, and the drills worked in metal sockets secured upon the frames.

The drills moved readily in their grooves so as to cause their point to strike the rock just as regularly as though they were manipulated by hand.

A pair of small wheels worked a set of cogs attached under the drills, which gave them motion when the electric current from the battery in the coach was applied.

As soon as the drills were placed in position against the rock to Frank Reade's satisfaction, he began the work of drilling the holes for the blasting cartridges, of which he carried a good supply in the locker of the coach.

A pair of copper wires served as the connection

between the battery and the electric drills, and when Frank had united the battery and the machinery of the drills by means of this wire, the former began to move, and the drills were driven into the rock with a swift and regular movement which drove holes rapidly.

As the rock was thus drilled it was necessary from time to time to advance the carriage which supported the drills so as to continue the work of penetration uninterruptedly.

The whole mechanical appliance and its working corresponded very nearly to steam drills such as our readers may have seen employed, and, in fact, Frank had caught the idea of his electrical appliances from the latter.

The drills soon made a good advance, and while the work was in progress a sharp lookout was kept for the return of the Afghans, which was momentarily expected.

All at once Barney grasped Frank's arm, and said in a low tone:

"Don't look Masther Frank. But, begob, I see an Afghan skulking there by the big black rock wid the tree over it beyant."

Frank did not look, but he said:

"Are you sure, Barney?"

"Yis, be dad. An', Masther Frank, if ye will have the illigant politeness to say the word, faith an' I will thry to make a sneak on the blackguard and give him a bit av a shindy while he's alone," replied Barney.

"That would be a needless exposure of yourself and, besides, how can you be sure there are not other Afghans lurking near the one you have discovered?"

"I'll chance the others. Begob, an Irishman is good for a dozen av the rascals any day. But whist a bit, ye don't see me foine little schame, Masther Frank, or ye wouldn't say it was nadeless."

"What is your scheme then?"

"To capture the blackguard alive, sur."

"What is your object in that, Barney?"

"Faith an' don't ye catch on til me idee. Begob an' if I could catch the blackguard beyant, don't ye see, that thin we would have the spalpeen to trade wid."

"To trade with?"

"Yis, in faith. We might make a dale wid the other blackguard. Trade 'em the blackguard for the mon we want to save. Begob, but I'm thinkin' it's not a bad schame at all, at all."

"By George, Barney, there are some brains in your head! But I hate to see you run such a risk of being captured yourself."

"Niver moind that. Begob I feel it in me bones that the blackguard up there is alone. I can erape on him as sly as a fox. It's gettin' darker all the toime, an' the darkness will stan me in on the chances."

"Mr. Reade," said Captain Conway, at this juncture, "I have been listening to what our Irish comrade has said, and I have seen and recognized the Afghan he has sighted. The fellow is old Kassadar's only son, and a prime favorite with his father and all his tribe."

"Then his capture would assuredly be a great point in our favor," replied Frank.

"Certainly it would. With Chief Kassadar's son in our power we would have a most valuable hostage to offer in exchange for our friend Richard Carlyle," said Conway.

"Thin let me go for the blackguard. Begob I'll bring him in safe and sound," urged Barney.

"All right. Since you insist you can make the attempt. Even if you are ambushed your armor will protect you from the Afghan bullets, and as you are swift-footed you may get back to us all unharmed."

"Thank ye, Masther Frank, I have me resolvers in me belt, an' I'll be off at once," said Barney.

"An' I'll be gwine wid yer," said Pomp.

"No, begob!"

"Yes, I is."

"Git out of me way, nagur," said Barney giving Pomp a push as he came forward. "Begob, this is me own plicie, an' no mokes invited, do ye moind that."

"You done hit me fo' nuffin'. Took dat fur a keepsake, Irish!" said Pomp.

Then, before Barney or any of the others anticipated his purpose, Pomp butted Barney in the stomach, and he went head first under the Electric Team.

The Irishman picked himself up instantan, and of course he was fighting mad. But Frank Reade promptly interposed between him and Pomp, and a battle between them was prevented.

"Barney can go alone. He thought of the plan to capture the Afghan, and he shall try it in his own way. So let me hear no more about your going with him, Pomp," said Frank, decidedly.

"Dat settles it. But I spees dat Irishman may done wish he had ole Pomp 'long wid him 'fore he gits back," muttered Pomp.

"Begob an' I'll not then. Here's luck to mesel'."

Barney O'Shea, long life til him," said the Irishman, pulling out his flask and taking a pull.

"Jine me, Moham, old rocks," he added, presenting the flask to the East Indian.

"Irishman is a fool!" exclaimed Mohammed, and Barney and Pomp laughed.

Then Barney crept to the rear of the electric coach and glided like a shadow into an opening at the side of the pass.

Some stunted bushes favored Barney, and under cover of them he was soon lost to the sight of his friends. The work of drilling meanwhile went on, and presently Frank Reade announced that the holes in the bowlder were deep enough for his purpose.

"Now we will put in the blasting cartridges," said the young inventor.

Pomp handed him two large blasting cartridges which were well charged with giant powder.

Very carefully Frank inserted the cartridges into the holes in the rock, and having properly tamped them down, he proceeded to attach the fuse and ignite them, hoping for as good results as he had obtained when he mined his way out of the pit in India.

The party retired, and presently the cartridges exploded.

The result was most encouraging. A large block of the great rock was detached, and the party hastened to lift it out of the way.

Then the drills were again put in motion. Frank thought that at least two and possibly three more blasts would be required to remove the remainder of the rock.

The inventor glanced all about along the hills where the darkness was deepening. He was anxious and he hoped the Afghans might not return in force until the rock was removed entirely.

But Frank did not see any of the Afghans.

Even the man whom Barney and Captain Conway had seen was no longer visible, and neither did the inventor see anything of Barney.

But a moment subsequently a wild Afghan yell rang out, and the succeeding instant Barney and the native he had gone forth to capture were discovered, struggling on an open ledge.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE CAPTURE OF THE AFGHAN CHIEF'S SON

It was a thrilling sight to witness the struggle between the Irishman and the Afghan.

The latter was a man of herculean build, and he was larger and seemingly more powerful than Barney.

The contestants were out of rifle range from the Electric Team; but even had such not been the fact it would not have done to fire a shot at the Afghan, as the danger of hitting Barney instead would have deterred the best marksman.

Pomp, the black dead shot, raised his rifle as if he had half resolved upon trying a desperate shot. But even the darky marksman was afraid of the risk.

Pomp lowered his weapon, and while the others watched the struggle between the two men on the rock the darky quietly and unobserved stole away.

As he went stealthily in the direction of Barney under cover, Pomp muttered in his characteristic way:

"I done serve dat fool Irish right to luff de Afghan got de best ob him, but I can't see me old pard done up by dat Afghan nohow."

Thrilled with suspense and solicitude, Frank Reade and the others continued to watch the strife between Barney and his antagonist.

No one observed that Pomp had crept away; but soon, in his solicitude for Barney, who was evidently overmatched as a wrestler, Frank said:

"Some of us must go to help Barney. It seems to me that the Afghan will soon overpower our friend if left to himself."

Just as Frank Reade thus spoke Barney's foot was seen to slip, and the next moment the Irishman went down.

The Afghan was on top, and an exclamation of horror burst from every witness of the scene as they saw the native clutch Barney by the throat, while he tried to draw his curved dagger from the scabbard about his waist where he carried it.

But the knife stuck in the Afghan's girdle, it seemed, for he made several ineffectual efforts to get it out, and Frank, followed by Moreland, started to go to Barney's rescue.

They had barely climbed up to the top of the first ledge beside the pass when suddenly they halted.

At that instant Pomp leaped into view directly behind the Afghan.

The powerful fellow had arrived just in time, for as he appeared, the Afghan succeeded in freeing the knife from his girdle and he made a movement to plunge the blade into Barney's breast.

But quick as thought itself, Pomp seized the Afghan's uplifted hand and, with a sudden wrench,

he tore the dagger from his hand and hurled the murderous blade far away among the rocks.

Then, as a startled cry of alarm was uttered by the Afghan, Pomp threw his powerful arms around his neck and drew him backward with a strangling hold.

The Afghan was dragged away from Barney, who regained his feet almost instantly.

Pomp suddenly freed one hand, whipped out his revolver, and, clubbing the weapon, brought it down upon the Afghan's head.

The force of the heavy blow stretched the powerful native senseless on the rock.

Then he was quickly lifted between Barney and Pomp, and they started to return with the fellow to the electric coach.

But a chorus of Afghan yells came from the upper height of the hill behind them at this juncture, and a large band of Afghans appeared over the ridge.

With agile leaps the Afghans rushed down the declivity, leaping from rock to rock, sure-footed as the mountain goat.

"Quick, on your lives! Drop the Afghan and save yourselves!" shouted Frank.

But Pomp and Barney did not obey Frank's order to release their captive.

On they came with him, and Frank and his friends leveled their rifles over the heads of the two devoted fellows.

The Afghans understanding that the chief's son was being carried away, came recklessly on, though they must have seen the leveled guns of the Europeans.

They did not halt when they were in range, and Frank shouted:

"Fire! We must hold back the Afghans and cover the retreat of our comrades."

The inventor and the others then promptly discharged their weapons at the on-rushing natives. Before the volley the Afghans recoiled.

A second fusillade from the repeating rifles of the Americans had the effect to send the Afghans back, though from their long guns they discharged a number of shots at the retreating men. Fortunately, the Afghans' bullets went wide however.

Barney and Pomp reached the electric coach with the captured Afghan in a moment or so, and then the fellow was securely bound and placed in the interior of the vehicle.

The inventor once more discharged the cannon a few times at the Afghans, and they retired, out of range.

The night had now fully come, but the moon and stars made light, and the work of blasting the rock was resumed.

Meanwhile the Afghan forces were seen to be augmented by the addition of constantly arriving bands, and Frank Reade said apprehensively:

"It seems that a whole Afghan army will soon be brought against us. We must get away and make a race with them as soon as we can."

The rock was blasted three times after this, and at last the barrier in the pass was entirely removed.

Then no time was lost in getting under way again. The Electric Team advanced once more and the Afghans were seen following.

But the shrewd natives had determined that the foreigners should not further penetrate into their country, and the inventor's party had not proceeded far when they found they must again halt.

Before them was a yawning chasm some hundred feet or more in depth, at the bottom of which ran a mountain torrent, and Frank Reade saw that the bridge which had spanned the stream had been destroyed.

"We can go no further, and the pass behind is thronged with the Afghans who are throwing up a barricade. I think, my friends, that we are about to be forced to engage in the most desperate battle we have ever known, and I will not attempt to conceal from you that I fear the worst," said Frank, as he halted the Electric Team at the chasm.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE GREAT BATTLE IN THE PASS.

It was quite evident to all that Frank Reade had stated the truth, and that a great battle with the Afghans was sure unavoidable.

The circumstantial evidence such as seemed to indicate that the Afghans might prove the victors and capture the inventor's party or massacre them all.

If the Afghans held the barricade in the rear they could besiege the Electric Team in the pass for any length of time.

Of course if the enemy chose, and it seemed there was no question about that, they could continue the contest until the ammunition of our friends was spent or starvation compelled them to yield.

In view of these considerations it was not to be

supposed that the inventor and his comrades should be without grave fears for the issue.

But Frank and all the others did not forget that they had the chief's son in their power.

The reflection that their prisoner would prove a trump card in the impending game of life and death was the source of their main hope.

And yet Frank Reade shrewdly resolved not to use the captive until the time came to make him serve them to the greatest possible advantage.

As soon as the Electric Team was halted and it was evident that there was no avoiding the threatened battle, the inventor's party held a short consultation.

They decided to make a bold defense until they had convinced the enemy that they were not easily to be defeated.

Then they meant to try what service the captive would be to them.

"True, our prisoner is not the son of Balkar, the chief who holds Carlyle a captive, and we may not be able to exchange him for our friend, but still I mean to make the attempt to do so, and not only that, but also to make our captive save us all," said Frank Reade.

"But is there not the greatest danger, that feeling confident that they can ultimately defeat us, the Afghans will refuse to negotiate for the surrender of the chief's son," said Dr. Vaneyke.

"Yes," added Conway. "Thinking they can set the chief's son free in the end, will not the Afghans refuse to make any terms?"

"No," replied Frank.

"You speak positively," said Moreland.

"I am convinced."

"Please explain," asked the doctor.

"I mean that the Afghans shall see the chief's son about to be put to death unless they make terms with us. Do you not understand my plan?" said Frank.

"Yes. Now I do. You mean that while the Afghans may capture us in the end, you will show them that we will kill the chief's son unless they make terms before they can reach him," said the doctor.

"Exactly. This is a question of life or death to us all. I am a humane man, but either the Afghans must make terms with us or the chief's son dies," said Frank Reade, in a stern, determined tone.

"I approve of your decision. It is our only hope, and to save ourselves anything is justifiable," said the doctor.

"Yes, self-preservation is the first law of nature, and certainly we cannot go against it," assented Moreland.

But now the enemy, having thrown up a formidable barricade of rocks and debris across the pass, which the Electric Team could not pass without delay to blast away the obstruction, began to advance.

The whole pass was filled with the fierce, murderous Afghans who had successfully battled with the English soldiers on more than one occasion, and they were indeed a formidable legion.

"These are the same clan who rose on the English in 1841 and suddenly massacred them. At that time the English General, Burns, and a lot of his officers were brought into the camp of a chief as prisoners under promise of safe guard, and then treacherously slaughtered. They are murderous rascals and certainly we have nothing to hope for in the way of mercy if once we fall into their power," said the good doctor.

"Yes," replied Captain Jack Conway, "these mountain clans are almost as savage and treacherous as the American Indian. They seldom take prisoners, preferring to slaughter their enemies."

"Well, begob, an' it's fight till the death we will be after doin'; an' Master Frank, shan't I give the ugly devils a shot from the cannon now?" said Barney.

"Yes. Depress the carriage. The cannon is now loaded with grape and canister, and it should do fearful execution on the compact advancing ranks of the enemy," replied Frank.

He had himself seen to the loading of the cannon, and he had charged it with such shot as seemed likely to be the most destructive under present circumstances.

Barney opened fire at once. A shower of missiles from the great gun was discharged into the ranks of the charging Afghans, and they recoiled.

But only for a moment. The chief of the clan sprang to the front shouting the shrill battle cries which often struck terror to the hearts of the British soldiers and the savage army came on.

Then from their repeating rifles a terrible volley was discharged as fast as the Americans could work their gun locks.

Like a discharge from a gatling gun came the rain of lead and the cannons was reloaded, while under the deadly fire the Afghan ranks wavered and finally fell back again.

Then the cannon belched forth.

The enemy could not stand the terrible slaughter longer. They retreated, and this time they did

not pause until they reached the barricade they had erected and were out of range.

A bill in the conflict ensued.

The defenders of the Electric Team were quick to take advantage of the momentary respite.

They quickly reloaded their repeating rifles. It did not take long to fill the cylinders of the breech-loaders with cartridges again.

As another charge amid a pandemonium of shouts and wild, unearthly yells was made, the Americans were ready to fire again.

And they did so. It seemed as though almost every shot told, and the pass was strewn with the fallen Afghans.

But this time the enemy rushed nearer the Electric Team than before.

For a moment it seemed the charge could not be checked before the yelling horde hurled themselves against the electric coach.

But the Afghans failed to hold the ground, just as Frank Reade thought the moment had arrived to bring forth the captive.

Again the Afghans retreated. They fled in disorder, and for a time there was no further assault.

The inventor's party could see the Afghan leader rushing about among the men striving to urge them to another charge.

But for the present the Afghans could not be urged by their chief. Their bullets had fallen upon the defenders of the coach, but seemingly did no harm.

The suits of mail had protected our friends against the bullets of the Afghans.

But the natives did not understand the cause of their immunity, and they were inclined to attribute the failure of their bullets to some supernatural agency.

Like all half-civilized savage people, the Afghans are more or less given to superstition.

They said among themselves that the strangers were magicians who had charms that protected them.

It was no doubt this superstition which rendered it impossible for the Afghan chiefs to immediately rally their force.

The uncivilized men could not at once, at least, bring themselves to again face the white magicians who charmed their bullets.

And so the night drew on with Frank Reade and his friends watchful and alert.

But while the Afghans remained in the pass the day dawned again, and still the battle was not renewed.

The sun had risen and was about three hours high, when an old chief of the Afghans was seen advancing from the ranks of his savage army.

He carried a white rag on a pole, and it seemed the war was advancing for a parley.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE FLAG OF TRUCE.

DURING their wars with the English the Afghans had learned sufficient of the usages of civilized warfare, it seemed, to understand that a white flag was always recognized as a symbol of peace.

So, confident of the protection to which his flag of truce entitled him, the old Afghan came boldly on.

As he drew nearer, Captain Jack Conway, who had been regarding him attentively recognized him, and he said:

"That old fellow is Kassadra himself. I'll wager that he is coming to treat for the surrender of his son."

"Good," said Frank. "Now I shall have an opportunity to make known my terms for the surrender of the young chief. The old fellow shall learn that it is a question of his son's very life that is to be considered."

"Kassadra is a wily and very treacherous rascal, and no reliance can be placed on his word. Do not agree to any terms that will give him an opportunity to betray confidence," said Conway.

"You may rest assured I shall be on my guard, and that I consent to nothing which can endanger us. I value my life too highly to trust it to the promise of an Afghan," replied Frank.

Then silence fell.

The inventor and his comrades continued to watch the approach of the native chief who came on steadily.

When at last he was within hailing distance he halted, planted his flag staff in the earth and addressed the Americans in his own language.

Mohammed promptly translated the words of the old chief.

When he paused, Mohammed said:

"The chief asks if you will give up his son if he draws off his army, and allows us to retreat back out of the hills."

"Tell him no," said Frank.

Mohammed did so.

The chief seemed surprised, and for a moment he was silent.

Then he spoke again in his own language, which Mohammed translated thus:

"What do the white men want, then? Kassadra has them in his power, and if they refuse his terms he will kill them all when their powder and shot is used up."

"Tell the old rascal that he will have to consent to our terms, or we will shoot his son before his eyes, before our shot is used up," said Frank.

Mohammed repeated his words verbatim in the Afghan language.

The old chief was evidently very much startled. He scratched his head, and looked blank.

"Begob, the old blackguard don't know what to make of that. Moham, me darlin', jist ax the spalpeen will he mate me where he is in a bit av a shindy, an' be me soul I'll give yez a drink from me flask whin no wan is lookin'," said Barney.

But Mohammed did not deign to notice the Irishman in the least, and he said:

"I think Kassadra begins to understand, Sahib, that in making terms he is not agoing to have it all his own way."

The old chief was silent for some moments.

"Gollie! Dat was a corker fo' de ole chap. I spec' dat he doan' know what to say next," chuckled Pomp.

But soon the Afghan spoke. Mohammed repeated his words thus:

"What does the white man want? What does he demand before he will give up the young chief to his people? Let the white man answer quick, for the Afghan men are anxious to come at him again if he does not make terms."

"It won't do to let the old rascal hurry us. Tell him we will consider what we demand, but he must wait until we are ready to tell him if he has any hope of saving his son," said Frank. And his words were duly translated.

Pomp and Barney laughed as they saw that the old chief was very much enraged when he heard what Mohammed repeated last.

Frank waited some moments, and then Mohammed translated his statement as to the terms on which he would surrender the chief's son.

Mohammed said:

"There is a European who is a friend of ours in the power of Balkar, the friend of Kassadra. We have come to save our friend. Now, if Kassadra would save his son, he must bring Balkar's white slave to us safe and unharmed, and then draw off his men and let us leave the mountain country in peace. When we reach the low lands, we will then set the chief's son free."

In reply to this Kassadra said:

"It cannot be. The Chief Balkar will not give his white slave to Kassadra. If the slave was the property of Kassadra he would give him for his son. But as it is it cannot be."

Then Mohammed repeated Frank's answer.

"We will give a purse of gold for the white slave of Balkar. We will give this gold to Kassadra. He shall take it and go and buy the white man and bring him to us."

"How much gold will the white man give?" demanded the chief.

Mohammed, instructed by Frank Reade, replied:

"A sum equal to one hundred English pounds."

"Then Kassadra will take the gold and go to Balkar. But he fears he will not sell the white slave," answered Kassadra.

"If not the chief's son dies," replied Frank through Mohammed.

"Kassadra will go at once. Give the gold. There shall be no more fighting until Kassadra comes back. The Afghans will watch close and the Europeans must not think they can slip away," said the chief.

Then Frank left the coach and met the old Afghan, and handed him the gold he had promised. Frank thought, as his own son's life was at stake, he could trust the old rascal.

Kassadra received the gold, and then strode away.

Frank returned to the electric coach. Kassadra was seen to rejoin his men.

A short time elapsed, and then the inventor's party saw the old chief leave the pass.

He was accompanied by a small band of his men.

The rest of the army remained to watch our friend and guard the pass, in case they made any attempt to escape.

Frank calculated that Kassadra ought to return by nightfall.

All were now exceedingly anxious for the return of the old chief, as may well be presumed.

Everything depended upon the success of Kassadra's mission.

If he did not succeed in buying Richard Carlyle from Balkar, the mountain chief, the inventor's party knew there was nothing left for them to do but die like brave men fighting to the bitter end.

Slowly to the anxious little band besieged in

that wild Afghan pass remote from civilized men, they wondered if they would live to see home and friends again, and a wonderful longing for America and their own hearthstones came upon them. They saw the faces of loved ones in the mirrors of their minds, and all were serious and silent.

Had they known that at this very time the young chief, who was a captive inside the electric coach, was cunningly plotting an escape which bade fair to prove successful all would have yielded completely to despair—abandoning all hope.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

RICHARD CARLYLE.

THE young Afghan chief had inherited his father's shrewdness, and from the first moment when he returned to consciousness and found himself a captive, he was determined to attempt his escape.

Frank Reade had himself seen that the Afghan was bound hand and foot, and the young inventor thought that his captive was so well secured that his escape would be impossible.

But Frank had not counted on the surprising cunning of the native. The young Afghan's hands were secured behind his back by means of cords.

His ankles were bound in a like manner.

The captive had seen Frank Reade place some matches in a box in the coach, and the bold fellow made a resolve to secure matches and burn off the thongs that secured him.

He was ready to undergo the torture of burning his flesh as well as his thongs, and, like the American Indian, he could endure torture without a sound.

The captive heard all that passed between his father and the Europeans when the old chief came to the electric conveyance with the white flag.

He knew, therefore, that no harm would befall him until his father returned, be the result of the old man's mission what it might.

The Afghan thought, therefore, that he would defer his attempt at escape until night drew on, and then, when everything favored him, he would try his desperate plan.

He did not think his father would return from Balkar's camp before night.

The hours wore on.

The sun had almost set.

Then the captive native commenced the execution of his surprising project.

He worked his body near the match-box, and with his teeth managed to pick up and strike a match, which he dropped upon the floor upon some shavings, which he had succeeded in working into a little heap. The shavings had been thoughtlessly made by Moreland, who was a down Easter, and had a habit of whittling.

When the shavings took fire and blazed up, the Afghan clinched his teeth, and leaned back until his wrist at his back and the ropes that secured them were in the fire.

The ropes burned, and so did the Afghan's flesh.

But he stood the pain. Not a groan escaped him, but his features were distorted with suffering.

At last, as he strained with all his might upon the burning thongs they parted, and the Afghan's hands were free at the cost of severely burned wrists.

Then he unfastened the cords about his ankles.

A moment later he was unfettered.

He stood still a moment and listened. Then he peered out of the window. He saw Barney standing at a small fire cooking, aiding Pomp to get the evening meal.

He had put out the fire. The next thing was to seize a favorable moment to make a dash to escape.

He knew that when the food which was being prepared was ready some would be brought to him, and then it would be discovered that he had gotten rid of his bonds.

During the day Frank Reade had looked in at the prisoner from time to time, and always found him secure.

Frank never once thought it possible that the Afghan might escape.

Presently, while the Afghan hesitated about making the dash from the coach which he contemplated, Frank Reade, from the top of the coach where he was eagerly watching for the return of Kassadra, saw a commotion among the Afghans.

The succeeding moment Kassadra was seen advancing again with a white flag, and with him came a white man.

The young inventor almost involuntarily uttered a glad shout.

He believed the white man whom he saw approaching with the old Afghan chief was surely Richard Carlyle.

At once Frank's shout called the attention of all, and pointing at the approaching men, Frank cried:

"I think there comes the missing man whom we came to Afghanistan to find!"

The next instant Dr. Vaneyke uttered a shout: "It is he! It is he! My cousin, Richard!" the good doctor cried.

He was delighted, and he ran to meet the white man.

Frank called to him to come back.

But the doctor in his excitement did not heed his friend.

He rushed on to meet his long lost cousin.

The meeting occurred a moment subsequently. There was no mistake. The white man who accompanied the Afghan chief really was the missing explorer, Richard Carlyle.

The cousins embraced when they met, and the old Afghan chief stood aside and did not attempt to interfere between them.

The reunited cousins paused where they were.

They had much to say to each other, and their words were rapidly uttered. The old Afghan became impatient at last.

He cried out angrily, and pointed toward the coach.

The doctor and Richard Carlyle understood, and they came forward together, followed by the Afghan.

Soon they reached the coach, and now, while through the window of the vehicle the captive saw that all his captors were gathered about the returned white man who was the center of attention, he thought his time to make a dash to escape had come.

But he wanted to injure his captors in some way, and he glanced about to see what he could destroy.

His eyes fell upon one of the main levers used to turn the electric current from the powerful battery on to the machinery of the Electric Team.

He thought he would break that, and seizing it, he gave it a terrific wrench. But instead of breaking it, he simply turned it in its groove and sent the electricity to the machinery. At once the vehicle began to move, and with a terrific yell, the Afghan bounded out of the coach and sped away.

Frank Reade, old Kassadra, and the others saw the escaping man, and with a glad shout the old Afghan sprang after his son.

Frank Reade's heart stood still.

"Merciful Heaven! If the chief's son escapes we will all perish. The fiends will starve us out and massacre us!" he shouted.

#### CHAPTER XL. OUT OF THE PASS.

It was a most critical moment for the inventor's party as the young Afghan—the chief's son—bounded away. All felt that Frank Reade voiced the truth when he cried:

"If the chief's son escape we shall all perish."

As these words passed Frank Reade's lips Barney and Pomp leaped after the chief's son. It will be remembered that the father of the escaping captive turned and fled as he witnessed his son's daring rush from the electric coach.

The white man whom the old Afghan had brought with him really was Richard Carlyle.

The gold of the Americans had enabled the old chief to purchase the white captive of Ameer Balkar. But the trade had not been accomplished without much difficulty.

As the Afghan chief and his son fled Richard Carlyle sprang forward and quickly reached the electric coach.

Dr. Vaneyke sprang to meet his cousin, and the two men grasped each other's hands and gazed upon each other in silence for the moment, for their great joy made them speechless.

Barney and Pomp, meanwhile, pressed the young chief close, and Frank Reade promptly checked the progress of the electric coach, which the escaping Afghan had accidentally started.

The Irishman and his comrade felt that the pursuit in which they were engaged was really a race for the prize of their own lives, and they ran as men only can under some awful incentive.

They gained upon the young chief, fleet footed though he was, as one of the wild goats of his native mountains, and an accident upon which they had not counted presently favored Barney and Pomp.

The young Afghan had just reached the edge of the rocks at the side of the pass at some distance from the coach, where it seemed possible for him to make an ascent of the mountain side when his foot slipped and down he went.

Before the young chief could gain his feet, Barney and Pomp were upon him, and the Irishman's clubbed rifle fell upon his skull.

The blow was a heavy one, and it knocked the fugitive senseless.

Without an instant's hesitation, Barney and Pomp lifted the young chief between them, and rushed back to the electric coach.

Frank Reade and the others witnessed the recapture of the hostage upon whose captivity all

their lives depended, with feelings of joy and gratitude, such as no pen can accurately describe.

A glad shout escaped Frank's lips, which every one of his comrades echoed.

But now the old Afghan had almost reached the barricade down the pass which sheltered his men, and prevented the escape of the Electric Team.

The father of the recaptured Afghan had been shouting commands to his followers to come on, and at the moment of the fall of the fugitive, the Afghan warriors were swarming over the barricade.

But when the old chief witnessed the recapture of his son a yell of rage and bitter disappointment escaped his lips, and then he quickly ordered his men back.

Meanwhile the party at the electric coach witnessing the preparations of the Afghans for a charge, had made ready to repel an attack as best they could.

When the old chief's order halted his men, Frank Reade shouted in delight.

"We can still hold the old chief to our terms."

The young inventor was right. The old Afghan was not as yet ready to sacrifice his son, and in a few moments, after consulting with his men, he again advanced toward the electric coach with a flag of truce.

When near enough to make his words distinctly heard by Frank Reade and his comrade, the chief said:

"I have kept my agreement, and brought the white slave of Balkar, the mountain chief, to you. Had my son escaped, I should not have held more parley with you until you were all begging for mercy at my hands. But as you still have my son in your power, I must go on and carry out my part of the agreement we have made."

"Glad to hear you still take a sensible view of the case, old chief. You remember our terms: You are to draw off your force, and not attempt to molest us further, and when we are on the highway on the plains, at a safe distance to the South, my word is still pledged to you that I will set your son at liberty," replied Frank.

"Yes. That was the agreement. Now I shall return to my men and march them away to the top of the lofty mountain to the North, from that height we shall watch you, and if you do not keep your word and set my son free as you agree when you reach the road on the plains, may all the Southern tribes, seeing the signal fires which we shall kindle if you play us false, arise to bar your way out of our country."

Thus replied the old chief, and then he turned and stalked away.

Arriving at the barricade where his men awaited him he gave orders for the march, and presently the occupants of the coach in the pass were delighted to see the enemy ascending the rugged hills on their way to the lofty mountains beyond.

Frank Reade waited until all the Afghan force was well on the way to the mountains, and then he sent all his party on to remove the barricade. Frank alone remained in charge of the electric coach and to guard the captive therein.

The task of removing the Afghans' barricade was one requiring some time and much labor for its accomplishment. But at length the last rock that impeded the way of the electric coach out of the pass was removed.

Then Frank started the electric coach, and his comrades having boarded the wonderful vehicle when the site of the recent barricade was reached, the return journey to the plains to the southward was commenced.

Soon the Electric Team was clear of the hills, and without delay or further adventure, the level plains below, where an excellent road led southward were reached.

With his telescope, Frank Reade, who was on the top of the electric coach, glanced back at the lofty mountains beyond the foot hills and presently he discerned the Afghan force under the old chief.

The natives had now reached the mountain top which the old chief had mentioned, and from that point of vantage, which commanded an extensive view of the surrounding country in every direction, the Afghans were watching the electric coach.

"Now," said Frank, as the electric coach entered a smooth native road, "we can defy pursuit, and so I will set our captive at liberty."

The young chief had regained consciousness, and Barney and Pomp now, instructed by Frank, who stopped the coach, set the young native free and told him to go.

Without a word the young chief bounded out of the coach, and sped away toward his mountain home like a hunted deer, and he was soon lost to the sight of Frank and his comrades.

Then the Electric Team was started forward again.

Meanwhile Richard Carlyle had related his

strange story of captivity among the Afghans, and it was a remarkable and interesting narrative; but the requirements of our narrative do not render its reproduction of importance.

"Well," said good Dr. Vaneyke joyfully, "we have accomplished the great purpose of our perilous journey and found the missing man."

"But we have not yet recovered the hidden treasure of the Parsees," said Frank.

"No, sahib, and I trust you will not forget the promise you made the poor Hindoo," replied Mohammed.

#### CHAPTER XLI.

##### "THE TREASURE OF THE PARSEES."

"NEVER shall we forget our promise to help you recover your hidden treasure, Mohammed, and when the gloom of night comes to hide our movements you shall act as our guide, and we will go to seek for your buried wealth," replied Frank.

"Yes," assented Moreland and the doctor.

"Begob an' it's a share Moham promised us av that same gold, so be me soul, if there is any crack-in' av skulls or a ruction to be had to get the gold, yez can count on Barney O'Shea," said the Irishman.

Barney always had an eye to the main chance. Pomp also hoped to have a finger in the golden pie.

"Gollie, Irish, I'se wid yer. Doan' yer fergit dat, I'se ready ter sail in an' butt a hull regiment of dem Afghan niggers, fer to git at Moham's bank. Yes, sah, I'se suah!" said the dorky.

"You are all welcome to a share," said Mohammed, smiling.

"Den take notice dat gold am as good as found. Yes, sah," said Pomp.

"An' Moham, old rocks, begob, an' it's mesel' as don't want to hurt your feelin's, so I'll trate on the strength av the gold. There's nothing mean about Barney O'Shea. Take holt, Moham. A wee bit av a swig will put new life in yer bones, begob," said Barney, and out came his flask, and he handed it to Mohammed.

To the jolly Irishman's and Pomp's complete astonishment Mohammed took the flask and put it in his pocket.

Then he said blandly:

"Thanks, Sahib Barney. You have so often invited me to drink that I have at last resolved to accept your flask, as I believe it contains the last bit of alcoholic stimulant we have with us, and we may need it yet in case of emergency. If not, when we are safely back in India I'll give you the flask again. Much obliged to you, Sahib Barney, much obliged indeed."

"Worra, worra! what iver will become av the loikes av me? Be gob, Pomp, an' he spakes the truth. The last drop out av the cask in the locker is in me flask: an' sure an' I hev put me fut in it at last, an' not a sup all the ways to India! Orrah, Pomp, ye black igit, ye, why didn't ye spake? Be gob, an' I've a moind til brake the head av yez fer lettin' me make a fool av mesel'!" said Barney, and his alarm and enagrin was most comical to behold.

"Sarves yer right, Irish! Dat's a joke on yer. Moham he done got even wid yer at last. Yah, yah!" said Pomp, and as the dorky roared the others joined in the laugh on Barney.

"Yes, Pomp is correct. You are served right, Barney. On this trip I have allowed you to have your own way with the liquor, mere than I should have done. You have drank up all our supplies in that line, and now a fast shall teach you a lesson," said Frank Reade.

"But not a drop until we git back to Indie! Worra, worra! Thin bury me deep, an' put a monument over me head, to let the world know that Barney O'Shea died in a good cause—whisky, be dad!" railed Barney.

"I'll give Sahib Barney a little hope. When the hidden gold of the Parsees is safely on board the electric coach he shall have a drink from this flask," said Mohammed.

"Thank ye, Moham, old rocks. Be dad I live wance more. Do yez hear that, Pomp, ye black-guard? There is hope for ould Ireland's son yet," cried Barney.

The electric coach halted at nightfall, and then Mohammed bared his breast and exhibited the map tattooed thereon, which was his guide to the place where the Parsees' gold was hidden.

After the strange map had been carefully studied, and some landmarks on it identified with those in sight on the plain Moham acted as guide, and under his direction the electric coach was turned upon a new course and ran north once more.

The darkness concealed the movements of the Electric Team, and the great electric lamp was not again ignited.

All night the young American ran his great invention steadily along, while Mohammed acted as his pilot.

The mountains which had been left behind were reached again before daylight came.

All experienced much anxiety, not to say fear, as they knew they were again in the neighborhood of the hostile hill-tribes.

But our friends had reached a point at the foot of the mountains many miles to the east of the pass in which the Afghans had hemmed them in, and it was by no means likely that they would encounter the same band of the natives from whom they had escaped.

Mohammed saw a great projecting ledge of rocks on the mountain side which corresponded to the same remarkable phenomenon in mountain landscape on the map tattooed on his breast.

On the tattooed map under the ledge was a circle in red.

The center of the circle contained the Hindoo word meaning "gold."

An arrow pointed at this word, and the East Indian knew that it meant that under the ledge the buried gold of the Parsees, which he hoped was to make his own and Wolandah's fortunes, was buried.

When the Electric Team stood under the projecting mountain ledge which marked the sight of the buried treasure, Mohammed said:

"Here we will halt and dig for the gold, diamonds and precious stones which represents the vast wealth accumulated by a long line of my Parsee ancestors."

In a short time the inventor's party were at work. But to guard against surprise, Pomp was selected to act as a picket and scout. At the first evidence which he might find that there were natives in the vicinity, Frank Reade instructed Pomp to return and inform him.

Mohammed directed the work of digging for the buried treasure systematically.

First he traced a circle under the ledge corresponding accurately with the circle of the tattooing, and of relatively approximate dimensions.

Then, in the center of this circle the party commenced to dig.

Barney was the first to break ground.

"Be gob an' I've the drop av' the creathur Moham promised me in me eye, an' if there is any gold betwixt here an' China, I'm the eye to lift it. Faith an' it's aisy diggin' here, not much like turf-diggin' in Cloneyclinty, be dad," said Barney.

He wielded the pick and shovel with a skill that surpassed all the others.

The soil, as Barney said, was soft and free from stone, and soon a considerable excavation was made.

"Be gob, I'm the professor av' the pick and shovel! It's a profession that comes aisy to an Irishman. Arrah, many is the day I've wielded the same in the ould sod. Whist! what's that? sure an' have I struck a rock at last!"

Barney uttered the last words as his pick struck some object at the bottom of the pit.

The contact produced a ringing sound.

"That was no stone," exclaimed Frank Reade.

"No, it was metal," said the doctor.

The treasure chest, perhaps," cried Mohammed excitedly.

Barney at once dropped on his knees in the bottom of the pit, and began to scrape away the dirt with his hands.

The succeeding moment he cried:

"Be dad, an' yer right, Moham, old rocks. It's an iron chist we've struck, an', be gob, I'll bet me socks it's yer bank!"

In a few moments the united efforts of the party enabled them to lift out of the pit a heavy iron chest. It was a difficult task to open it, but this

was finally done, and then the party beheld a vast treasure indeed. The great chest was packed with priceless diamonds, gold and jewels of all kinds.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### CONCLUSION.

THE wildest dreams of hidden wealth which any of Frank Reade's party could ever have indulged in, were surpassed by the reality.

The treasure of the Parsees was vast enough to enrich a hundred men.

The amazement of the inventor's party found expression in characteristic remarks, and almost every one present had something to say.

"Be gob," said Barney, when all but himself had spoken. "It's a mumber av Congress I'll be whin I git back to the United States wid all me share av that gold. Sure it's thin I can carry me Congressional district in me pocket, and spind more money wid me constituents than any mon!"

There was a laugh at Barney's expense, and then Mohammed said with emotion:

"At last the gold which my forefathers buried from their enemies so long ago comes back to me, and so justice is done. But I have you all to thank, my American friends, and most of all, Sahib Reade, the great inventor, without whose wonderful Electric Team I should never have dared to come in search of my buried inheritance."

"That's all right, Mohammed. You are welcome to my services, and I am sure all my comrades say the same. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, and if Mr. Carlyle had not been captured by the Afghans, probably the Electric Team would never have come to this country," replied Frank Reade.

"Be gob an' if yez will all give me a hand now, we will have the treasure-box safe on board the electric coach in the whisk av' a lamb's tail," said Barney, smacking his lips in anticipation of the reward Mohammed had promised him.

"I understand Barney's impatience," said Frank, laughing.

"Sure an' I'm afraid the Afghans may surprise us and rob Moham of—of the whisky flask!" said Barney.

"Ha! Ha! I thought so! You are more concerned for the safety of the flask than for the treasure," laughed Frank.

Then the party lifted the iron chest between them, and carried it to the coach. Frank assured the company that his remarkable vehicle could sustain the additional weight of the treasure, and so the chest was placed in the interior of the coach.

"Now, begob, Moham, old rocks, I hould yez til yez word. Give me the wee bit av a drop from me flask as yer promised you would whin the gold was all safe on board av the lectric coach," said Barney.

"Yes, Sahib Barney. Here, help yourself," replied Mohammed.

He handed Barney the flask.

Barney placed it to his lips and drank eagerly, while a smile of pleasure appeared upon his comical face.

Presently he handed the flask back to Mohammed, saying:

"Thank ye, Moham, old rocks; I would ax ye to jine me, but be dad, the flask is empty; so keep it to remember the day by, an' whin ye git it filled an' take a drink on the sly, take wan for yer old friend, Barney O'Shea."

Thus said Barney with mock emotion, which made all hands roar.

But Mohammed threw the flask away, and it was broken upon the rocks.

"Ye may break, ye may shatter the vase if ye will, But the sint av the whisky will cling to it still,"

chanted Barney, and he added:

"An' begob, sich is the end av me old pocket friend. We have traveled all over the world together, and me one hope—me one wish was that Moham, old Rocks, might drink from it wonce for ould acquaintance sake," said Barney, who felt the whisky he had drank pretty strongly.

A moment later and Frank gave a signal which was to call in Pomp. The darky presently joined the party, and he was overjoyed when he learned the treasure was stowed away in the coach.

Pomp reported that there were no natives in the neighborhood, and so Frank Reade got the Electric Team under way, and the party set out for India.

We need not dwell on the journey back. Suffice it to say the Electric Team carried our friends safely out of Afghanistan.

They reached Lahore and found Runee still safe at the residence of Sir George Peyton, the English resident.

A large number of prisoners captured by a company of English soldiers who had been out in the jungle for the purpose of arresting Phansigars or the strangers, who had caused our party so much trouble during their journey through India, came into the city under guard on the day of the arrival of Frank Reade's party.

Among the captured Phansigars was the old Brahmin who had carried off Runee at the time Frank Reade rescued her at the tree dwellers' village.

The old man was wounded and dying, and he sent for the resident and confessed to him that Runee was really the daughter of a wealthy English merchant living in Calcutta.

The old Brahmin had stolen Runee as an act of vengeance when she was an infant.

Runee was delighted to hear that she was an English girl, and Moreland volunteered to take her to her parents, and so she went with him and Frank Reade's party in the electric coach.

Before the party left, Lahore Mohammed made each one accept a splendid gift in gold and diamonds.

Then Mohammed placed the balance of his wealth in a place of safety, and said good-bye to Moreland, Frank Reade and all his friends, and went to join Wolandah, and help him gain the crown of the Rajah of Jagpore who had usurped his throne.

Moreland some time later had the pleasure of restoring Runee to her parents, and he received their consent to his marriage with her.

In Calcutta Moreland remained while Frank and the rest of the party sailed for the United States, taking the electric coach and team, securely packed, with them.

Moreland promised to visit the United States for his wedding journey when he and Runee were married, and so all expected soon to see him again in his native land.

The voyage to New York was made in safety, and leaving the others in New York, Frank, Pomp and Barney, with the Electric Team, returned by rail to Readestown, and they were welcomed most warmly, not only by their own families, but the entire population turned out to meet them at the depot.

Frank Reade's home-coming this time was a positive ovation, and he felt very proud and happy.

And now, as our story is told, it only remains to write—

[THE END.]

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